

VINEHEALTH AUSTRALIA

2021/22 Performance at a glance



In the past year, the grape and wine industry has navigated challenges arising from the COVID-19 pandemic, geopolitical forces, seasonal weather conditions and rising cost pressures. It is within this operating environment that Vinehealth Australia has worked tirelessly in 2021/22 to ensure that the South Australian grape and wine industry doesn't encounter another significant burden; being a biosecurity shock of a significant pest or disease that devastates the health of vines.

A year into our current strategic agenda, significant work continues to nurture existing and forge new partnerships with industry and government to deliver biosecurity expertise aligned with our statutory functions. These include:

- Deepening our support for grape and wine businesses to implement on farm biosecurity practices
- Ongoing counsel and support to PIRSA in managing biosecurity outbreaks and incidents, including significant resources directed to the fruit fly outbreaks
- Engagement with State and regional grape and wine associations
- Strengthening links with the South Australian Vine Improvement Association (SAVIA) through priority areas to support production of high health propagation material

On behalf of the South Australia grape and wine industry, we have invested considerable time into shaping regulatory issues that are of significant importance to the health and operation of vineyards. These include providing advice to PIRSA regarding the gazettal of the Mornington Peninsula as a Phylloxera Exclusion Zone, the deregulation of Grapevine Pinot gris virus, establishing with PIRSA a pause-point system for biosecurity accreditations, and defining the scope for improved national phylloxera management. We take a scientific, risk-based, practical approach to these matters which serves the interests of South Australian grape and wine businesses, and that of the broader wine industry.

Our dedication to influencing these regulatory matters, despite acknowledged headwinds, is unwavering. As required under our governing Act, significant time and resources continue to be devoted to maintaining the Register of all vineyards 0.5 hectares or larger in South Australia – which includes maps of vineyards, planting, location, and owner information. A unique asset of the State, and admired by other sectors, the Register was deployed in 2021/22 for key biosecurity preparedness, prevention and response activities. It also provided key foundational information to support government activities, including storm response, prescribed burns, bushfire response and water allocation planning.

Looking ahead, it is vital that the opportunity to transform the Register and unlock and accelerate the use of information held, is realised. With funds set aside to invest in this digital transformation initiative, we will be actively seeking co-investment in 2022/23.

Mindful of the operating landscape for the wine industry, sustainable funding for Vinehealth to perform our statutory functions to the level expected by industry and government, remains unresolved. A considered conversation is required in 2022/23, reflective of the rising biosecurity risk facing the South Australian grape and wine industry.

This risk was noted in Vinehealth's 2021 Vineyard Owner Survey, with 72% of respondents being concerned about the exposure of their business to a biosecurity risk. Pleasingly however, on average a 12% increase (2021 cf. 2018) was reported in the adoption levels of nine out of ten important farm-gate hygiene practices by respondents. This trend is significant.

We were also thrilled that vineyard owners see the value in the work that Vinehealth is doing, with 94% of respondents to the survey agreeing that Vinehealth's activities are vital in protecting South Australia's vineyards and the wine industry against significant pests and diseases. Our communication, singular focus on grape and wine biosecurity and independence are highly regarded.

Our legislative powers provide us with a unique view into government and access to information on incidents and outbreaks that cannot always be provided to industry given confidentiality requirements. This enables us

to proactively shape biosecurity activities, policy and legislation of government for the benefit of the South Australia grape and wine industry.

I am privileged to work alongside the Vinehealth team; their expert advice to myself, industry and government drives exceptional biosecurity outcomes. I also thank the Chair and Board of Vinehealth for their strategic oversight and counsel. It is with an immense sense of responsibility and accountability to growers and winemakers, that I am proud to close out 2021/22 for Vinehealth and embrace 2022/23.

Inca Lee
CEO



WHAT DRIVES US

Our purpose: To foster a profitable, sustainable and reputable grape and wine industry in South Australia.

Our vision: Biosecurity action is integrated in every grape and wine business.

Our values: To pursue new knowledge, deliver high impact activities, collaborate with industry, government and other key partners, maintain a razor-sharp focus on biosecurity and to honour our independent status.

PERFORMANCE AT A GLANCE

Feedback from industry on Vinehealth's performance

From Vinehealth's 2021 Vineyard Owner Survey

- 94% agreed that Vinehealth's activities are vital in protecting South Australia's vineyards and the wine industry against significant pests and diseases.
- 90% agreed that Vinehealth is a trusted source of biosecurity information.
- Deep and broad support for all key activities and functions of Vinehealth was reported by survey respondents: 95% or more reported a level of importance for all Vinehealth functions, with the exception of 'Supporting other government agencies' having 83% support.

PRIORITY AREA 1: SOLUTIONS ACROSS THE GRAPE AND WINE SUPPLY CHAIN

- Measured South Australian vineyard owners' thoughts on biosecurity threats, adoption of farm-gate hygiene practices, and barriers to improving the implementation of these practices, through the 2021 Vineyard Owner Survey. Highlights include:
 - On average there was a 12% improvement (2021 cf. 2018) in adoption level of nine out of ten farm-gate hygiene practices. Time and cost continue to be the greatest barriers to adoption.
 - 72% of vineyard owners remain concerned about the exposure of their business to a biosecurity risk.
 - Phylloxera is of greatest concern with 66% of vineyard owners reporting a level of concern (potentially reflective of greater awareness of phylloxera over other significant pests).
 - Hosted a field day/workshop at the Coonawarra Rootstock Trial site focused on educating growers on grapevine rootstocks to combat climate change and biosecurity risk.
 - Commenced stage 2 of a project to quantify grapevine rootstock supply and demand and identify key factors that influence the grafted vine supply chain.
 - Continued work on a footwear solution for the wine industry with project partner Sans Waste Manufacturing.
 - Provision of industry-specific signage and disinfestation kits on request, with a 188% increase in sales of farm-gate hygiene signs.
 - Operation of the Heat Shed at Naracoorte, providing a disinfestation solution for machinery and equipment between the Limestone Coast and other SA regions.
 - Engagement with the South Australian Vine Improvement Association (SAVIA), Wine Australia and virus experts to advance the development of standards and accreditation schemes for propagation material, and specifically management of virus.
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PRIORITY AREA 2: PEST IMPACTS MINIMISED

- Considerable time invested supporting PIRSA to respond to 8 plant pest biosecurity incidents, including completion of 3 Ministerial briefings and a Pest Information Data Sheet.
 - Provided significant biosecurity expertise and response support to PIRSA for the Riverland and Adelaide metropolitan fruit fly outbreaks.
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PRIORITY AREA 3: REGULATORY ENVIRONMENT SHAPED

- Continued to encourage state governments and national industry bodies to review the current National Phylloxera Management Protocols and develop a new national phylloxera management strategy to ensure the grape and wine industry is protected through a robust national system.

New scientific knowledge on phylloxera, contemporary biosecurity principles, and a valid risk-based approach must be incorporated to ensure that the Protocols are effective in preventing the further spread of phylloxera.
- Key actions communicated to industry to ensure efficacy of farm-gate hygiene practices as a result of Agriculture Victoria's three-year phylloxera research project findings.
- Completed a comprehensive review of the Agriculture Victoria's Mornington Peninsula Phylloxera Rezoning Project final report (July 2021) and statistical assessments, and PIRSA's risk assessment, with final advice and considerations to PIRSA drafted.
- Implemented a pause-point system for biosecurity accreditations with PIRSA in response to industry feedback during the fruit fly outbreaks.
- Assisted industry and government on quarantine-related enquiries.

PRIORITY AREA 4: STRONGER TOGETHER

- Continued to lead the conversation about wine biosecurity in Australia through news articles, feature articles, videos and case studies in the media, on industry platforms, in our monthly e-news and on our website.
 - Vinehealth's e-news has an average open rate of 52%, a 2% increase on 2020-21 and well above the industry average of 21%.
 - Continued to support vineyard owners, regional associations and the Department for Environment and Water during the autumn prescribed burns season in the Adelaide & Mount Lofty Ranges Region to ensure the risk of smoke taint was minimised.
 - Continued to use Vinehealth's Register to provide aggregated, deidentified planting data on request to vineyard owners, regional and state wine industry associations, and also to the SA government for storm and bushfire response.
 - Vinehealth fielded 253 general requests for information from industry and government with the top 4 service request topics making up 84% of the total number:
 - 42% – quarantine matters
 - 18% – request for materials, workshops, presentations, interviews and reviews
 - 14% – Register information
 - 10% – strengthening interstate ties
 - Provided aggregated, deidentified data from Vinehealth's Register for the 2022 SA Winegrape Crush Survey.
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PRIORITY AREA 5: A SUSTAINABLE ORGANISATION

- Continued to maintain the State's unique Register of vineyard plantings, including:
 - The re-digitisation of Barossa, Clare and Eden Valley planted areas
 - Involvement in the conveyancing/sale process of over 250 properties on which vines were planted
 - Processing Vineyard Record returns received from Vineyard Owners
 - Responding to direct contact from Vineyard Owners

This core asset is used by Vinehealth for all preparedness, prevention and response activities.
 - Managed the collection and recovery of contributions payable by Registered Persons (Vineyard Owners).
 - Continued to liaise with the Minister on new rules and rates for contributions payable under the *Phylloxera and Grape Industry Act 1995*, to ensure adequate funding for Vinehealth to perform its statutory functions. This is a significant matter for Vinehealth to address with the Minister and industry in 2022-23, to ensure sustainable funding for Vinehealth to safeguard vineyards from biosecurity threats.
 - Continued to liaise with PIRSA and the Minister on funding sources to transform Vinehealth's Register into a practical digital biosecurity solution.
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FINANCIAL PERFORMANCE

A summary of Vinehealth's financial performance, including full audited financial statements for 2021/22 can be found in Vinehealth Australia's 2021/22 Annual Report. This report will be available on Vinehealth's [website](#) once it has been tabled in the South Australian Parliament (November 2022).

WHAT TO KNOW MORE?

Contact Inca Lee, CEO of Vinehealth, on inca@vinehealth.com.au
Visit Vinehealth's website www.vinehealth.com.au