



# MEDIA RELEASE

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## **WGGA announces successful tenderers for key national vineyard biosecurity projects**

Strong technical expertise, a national focus and a wealth of experience in pest and disease management in Australia are the stand-out characteristics of the two organisations that have been successful in winning the biosecurity project consultancies recently offered for tender by Wine Grape Growers Australia.

"We were very pleased with the level of interest and standard of submissions received", Mr Lawrie Stanford, Executive Director of WGGA, said. "I am confident we have chosen two excellent organisations to help deliver these extremely important projects for the wine sector."

The first project, due for delivery later this year, will be to prepare a strategic plan and business case, through consultation with industry, for longer-term national biosecurity arrangements in viticulture. Stuart Pettigrew, of Ag Dynamics, has been selected for this task and he brings 25 years' of experience in working with agricultural businesses on pest and disease management including in vineyards and other horticultural crops.

"Not only does Stuart have great depth of knowledge in pest and disease management and biosecurity across a range of crops," Mr Stanford noted, "he has also worked as a vineyard manager and has direct experience with the issues and realities facing grape growers."

The second project has been awarded to the Australian Wine Research Institute (AWRI). AWRI will deliver biosecurity operations that fulfill the grape sector's obligations to the Emergency Plant Pest Response Deed, which defines the cost sharing arrangements between the industry and the Commonwealth government for responses to exotic pest incursions, as well as dealing with national ramifications of endemic pest and disease management. These tasks will be outsourced to AWRI for the next 12, and possibly 24 months, while longer term arrangements are being developed and implemented.

"The AWRI's expertise in matters of viticulture pest and disease, its prominence in extension activities to vineyard operators and its acknowledged capacity in executing rapid responses to weather and disease events all recommended it to the task" said Mr Stanford, adding that "a key feature of AWRI's tender was its ready-to-go industry knowledge and established industry networks across Australia. All of these qualities ensure that growers will be engaged in biosecurity management activities that affect them."

AWRI's project activities will be delivered primarily by Kerry DeGaris, with support from the AWRI viticulture team. Kerry is a qualified viticulturist with 17 years' experience working in many grapegrowing regions of Australia.

The WGGGA Chair, Mr Vic Patrick, noted that the value of these initiatives to the wine sector could not be overstated. "At a time when profitability for winegrape growers is low, it is critical that industry organisations maintain policies and programs that will protect vineyards from preventable threats."

The projects are being funded by voluntary contributions from a range of organisations with viticulture interests. Moreover, the strategic planning will engage with the range of the viticulture industries including winegrapes, dried fruits, table grapes and nurseries.

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### **About WGGGA**

WGGGA is the national voice for Australian winegrape growers. It is an incorporated association that is accountable to its members through a representative Executive Committee. There are roughly 6,200 winegrape growers in Australia and WGGGA can count around 3,700 of these as having a direct involvement in the organisation.

In close collaboration with the other national bodies, WGGGA works on key policy issues affecting the nation's winegrape growers. These include biosecurity, vine health, and improving market access for winegrapes. On market access, it plays an active role in negotiating maximum residue limits in key markets for Phosphorous Acid applications in the vineyard, promotes the industry's Code of Conduct and advocates for improved commercial practices between growers and wine companies.

WGGGA embraces a mission of advancing the development and sustainability of the Australian winegrape growing sector across the four dimensions of a quadruple bottom line:

- Economic - pursuing grower competitiveness, grower profitability and the contribution of winegrape growing to the Australian and regional economies.
- Social - improving the status of growers in whole-of-value-chain business practices and supporting responsible wine consumption.
- Environment – supporting sustainable use of environmental assets.
- Governance – good organisational management, transparency and responsiveness to market conditions in addition to championing the same throughout the wine value chain.