

Hon Tim Whetstone MP

Minister for Primary Industries and Regional Development

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New vineyard technology to be trialled in Riverland

A \$134,000 Marshall Liberal Government grant will launch a digital precision control system pilot program for grape growers in the Riverland aiming to assist growers to optimise production and support overall vineyard efficiency, profitability and sustainability.

Riverland Wine is teaming up with the University of Adelaide and Wine Australia to trial a Digital Vineyard Guidance System – a technology platform that can provide real-time information to improve decision making.

Minister for Primary Industries and Regional Development Tim Whetstone said the trial could be a game changer for the industry.

“The State Government is proud to support innovative technological developments like this, to help wine grape growers make better business choices and become more responsive and competitive,” said Minister Whetstone.

“This system will help our growers make better on-the-ground decisions as part of their day-to-day work and will enable stronger community connectivity to provide a platform for information sharing.”

The pilot is funded from the South Australian Wine Industry Development Scheme and comprises three key components:

- Sensing and retrieval – incorporating multiple sensing and data streams at the soil (e.g. moisture, salinity, temperature), plant (e.g. microclimate, plant water status, bud count, sugar content) and farm level (consumption of water, energy, fertilizer and pesticide rates).
- Information and analytics – presented as a dashboard to help growers better understand and gain important insights into data
- Prediction and control – in the form of targeted crop interventions strategies (e.g. canopy management, sprays, fertiliser) and predictions to enable ‘what-if’ scenarios to explore different intervention options.

“The Riverland is Australia’s largest wine producing region and is well placed to be part of this trial,” said Minister Whetstone.

“The outcomes of the six-month pilot will be shared among all South Australian wine regions, so they can benefit from the knowledge gained as part of this project.

“These types of investments support South Australia’s wine industry, which was worth \$2.35 billion in 2016–17.

“The project will provide important ‘proof-of-concept’ developments needed to inform the potential of a broader program.”