

Volume 6

Summer 2000



COOPERATIVE  
RESEARCH CENTRE  
*for*  
VITICULTURE

# Newsletter



*L-R: GWRDC Board Chairman John Stocker; CRCV Chairman Peter Barnes, CEO Jim Hardie and GWRDC Executive Director David Hall inspecting a vineyard in the Riverland.*

## Inside

CEO's Report **2**

Soil research & PhD Profile **3**

Program Industry Reference  
Groups **4 - 6**

Environmental Management  
Systems **7**

Argentina report & Diary Dates **8**

## Cooperative Research Centre for Viticulture

Adelaide University

The National Wine and Grape Industry Centre  
(Charles Sturt University, NSW Agriculture)

The Australian Wine Research Institute  
CSIRO

Department of Natural Resources  
and Environment, Victoria

Primary Industries & Resources SA

The Australian Dried Fruits Association Inc.

Winemakers' Federation of Australia Inc.

Winegrape Growers' Council of Australia Inc.

Grape and Wine Research  
and Development Corporation

The Dried Fruits Research and  
Development Council

(Wine Industry National Education  
& Training Advisory Council Inc.)

WINETAC Inc.

## CRCV Board meets in regional SA

The CRCV held its October Board meeting in South Australia's Riverland.

CEO **Jim Hardie** said the visit to the Riverland gave the Board an opportunity to "see first hand what's happening, gain a greater understanding of viticultural issues and meet face-to-face with regional industry leaders and researchers".

"We chose the Riverland as the place to hold the first regional Board meeting because it is an important production area and the future growth of the industry will depend on high-quality production coming out of the region," he said.

While in the Riverland, the Board members toured several CRCV trial sites including that of *Project 2.1*, 'Matching rootstock and scion physiology to irrigation practice'.

"We also had an opportunity to see a good example of viticulture and the environment working in harmony in a commercial vineyard when we visited Banrock Station, owned by BRL Hardy," said Jim.

"We saw how vineyards and wetlands can coexist, the role of monitoring the environment; climate, water use and salinity, and the value-adding opportunities this approach produces in terms of tourism."

A highlight of the visit was an address by **Dr Bob Damberg**s, Quality Assurance Manager with BRL Hardy, who talked about the application of NIR (Near Infrared Spectroscopy) technology for measuring grape quality.

A participant in CRCV *Project 1.4*, Dr Damberg said BRL Hardy had found a definite relationship between NIR, grape colour and wine quality.

The method is expected to greatly speed up the assessment of grape quality at the weighbridge.

Bob said he thought NIR had a big future and recognised the need for a clear trace-back from wine to vineyard for winemakers and grapegrowers to get the greatest value from it.

The CRCV Board meeting also coincided with the Grape and Wine Research and Development Corporation's Board meeting allowing Jim and CRCV chairman, **Peter Barnes**, to present their annual briefing to the Board detailing what has been achieved in the past 12 months with funds invested in the CRCV, by grapegrowers and winemakers, through the GWRDC.

Local SARDI researchers also gave a presentation to the CRCV and GWRDC Boards about other research activities in the region.

## CEO's Report

The CRCV has been advised that **Dr Nigel Scott** will be the new CSIRO nominee on its Board.

Dr Scott, Assistant Chief CSIRO Plant Industry, will take over from **Dr John Radcliffe** who has been a member of the Board since its inception. We wish to thank John for his considerable contribution towards establishing the new Centre and its staffing.

### Program Industry Reference Groups

All the CRCV's Program Industry Reference Groups have met and provided valuable feedback about our research and education and training programs.

Each of the groups are made of people in the commercial sector of the viticulture industry. A spokesperson from each of the groups will liaise with the Program Managers, CEO and the Chairman of the CRCV Industry Reference Group as required.

This will help build closer links between CRCV researchers and industry and will optimise the review and assessment of progress within each of the Centre's Programs.

### Centre Performance Indicators

The CRCV has completed a review and revision of its performance indicators. The indicators are now based on Bennett's Hierarchy, a performance indicator model of seven levels, for setting and evaluating project objectives.

Delivering tangible outcomes is what the Centre is about. This model, which places greater emphasis on outcomes and less attention on project inputs, is more applicable to the CRCV's objectives.

### CRCV Participants' Guide

The 'Participants' Guide to the CRCV' has been published and widely distributed in the last month. It is a comprehensive document outlining everything you need to know about the CRCV as a participant. If you have not received a copy, please contact the CRCV office on (08) 8303 9405 or email: [crcv@saugov.sa.gov.au](mailto:crcv@saugov.sa.gov.au).

### The end of another year

The CRCV has had a productive year and the future is looking very bright in terms of achieving our research and education and training goals.

I would like to thank all CRCV participants particularly the Program Managers, Project Leaders, researchers and members of the industry reference groups for their contribution and commitment. They are greatly appreciated and valued and we look forward to forging ahead next year.

Have a safe and enjoyable festive season and a happy new year.

Jim Hardie CEO

## More Field Trials for GM Grapes

The Genetic Manipulation Advisory Committee is currently assessing a new application to plant experimental GM grapevines in the field at the CSIRO's research station at Merbein (Victoria).

Researchers have now met twice with the members of the Mildura City Council to discuss the research and answer questions.

So far the experimental vines have been studied extensively in secure glasshouses at Urrbrae, but it is essential that vines are allowed to grow in a more realistic environment to be able to observe field performance, yield, response to stresses and other factors.

To do this the vines are planted in a separate block and monitored closely. All flowers are bagged to stop pollen escape and to prevent removal of fruit by birds. At this stage the researchers are interested to see how the vines perform compared with untransformed vines of the same variety. All excess materials from the vines, such as prunings – are destroyed.

The genes that have been added to these vines include an anti-browning gene for dried fruit, a gene which regulates flower and fruit development and a gene involved in berry colour. To enable researchers to track the location and activity of the new genes, 'reporter genes' are also added to some plants.

Reporter genes must be inert and non-toxic, so that they do not change the plant in any way, but can be 'seen'.

Reporter genes are only used in the research phase of such projects - once a specific protein's function is understood the reporter gene is not needed.

Grapevines used in the CSIRO project are experimental plants only. Once their performance has been assessed they will be destroyed.

*There are no genetically modified grapes or other products being used in Australian wines.*

## Newsletter

The Cooperative Research Centre for Viticulture Newsletter is produced bi-monthly. All contributions are welcome, especially reports from conferences, seminars and international trips.

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## Getting to the root of the problem

**C**RCV researchers are endeavouring to determine what volume of soil is needed for growing grapevines with balanced vegetative growth, high yields and good fruit quality.

*Sub-project 2.3.4*, ‘Optimising root volume through soil amelioration’, is taking place in Tatura and Nagambie in Victoria’s Goulburn Valley where hard, red duplex soils can limit vine growth and performance.

Duplex soils have a shallow surface (0-200 mm) with a medium to heavy clay subsoil (200-600 mm) that grapevine roots find hard to penetrate thereby restricting growth and causing drainage problems.

CRCV Project supervisor, **Mr Ian Goodwin**, from the Department of Natural Resources and Environment, Victoria, said growers are addressing the shallow soil problem by deep ripping, which breaks up the dense subsoil, or hilling soil, which increases the depth of the top soil, but they do not know what volume of soil is needed to maximise yield and quality.

“The objective of the research is to quantify exactly what the optimum soil volume should be,” he said.

The study will also look at the interaction of Partial Rootzone Drying (PRD) with soil volume to determine what percentage of a root zone needs to be watered to achieve the best results.

To date, the research has involved planting out about 250 Shiraz vines in a half-hectare trial site at the Institute of Sustainable Irrigated Agriculture at Tatura.

Last year vines were put into large pots and grown in a glasshouse and this year have been planted into the vineyard.

Ian said they will remain in pots of varying soil volumes, ranging from 0.15 to 0.45 cubic metres, and be exposed to different irrigation strategies.



*Ian Goodwin measuring soil moisture in the vineyard at Tatura.*

The roots of some vines have been split into two and others into four separate pots to gauge the percentage of the root zone that needs to be irrigated under PRD.

A drainage system has been installed in each of the pots to enable the researchers to monitor how much water has drained through each pot and how much the vines have transpired.

Ian said he hopes the project will lead to being able to advise growers about the depth of soil required for ideal growing

conditions and how to maximise the effects of PRD by the way irrigation systems are designed and managed.

A satellite trial site has been established at a vineyard in Nagambie, owned by Petaluma Limited, to assess a combination of PRD and hilling.

This site will enable some of the results generated from the experiment at Tatura to be verified in a commercial vineyard.

**For further details, contact Ian Goodwin on (03) 5833 5222.**

## Profile

**A**ndrew Hall is from New Zealand and recently graduated from the University of Otago with a Master of Science in Geography. After completing his Masters he worked for six months as a viticulturist with Villa Maria Estate at its Marlborough winery.

Andrew started his CRCV PhD in June this year and is working on ‘Precision Viticulture’ (*Program 1, Sub-Project 1.1.1*) at Charles Sturt University, Wagga Wagga. He is supervised by Dr David Lamb.



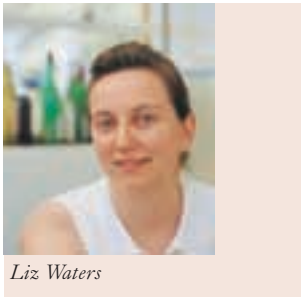
*Andrew Hall*

The aim of the project is to develop the necessary protocols for assessing multispectral images of vineyards. The project will also investigate the potential of airborne multispectral imaging as a tool for identifying and predicting variability within vineyards.

# Industry groups meet with CRCV

Program Industry Reference Groups, made up of people in the commercial sector of the viticulture industry, have been established for each of the CRCV's programs and its Viticare initiative.

In the last few months all groups have met and provided valuable feedback to the CRCV about its activities and progress. Summaries of the key points from each meeting, including the names of the participants, are presented here.



Liz Waters

## Program 1

Program 1's Industry Reference Group has received a comprehensive introduction to its projects at its first meeting.

Researchers briefed the group about each project's objectives and achievements to date and gave participants an opportunity to interact and ask questions.

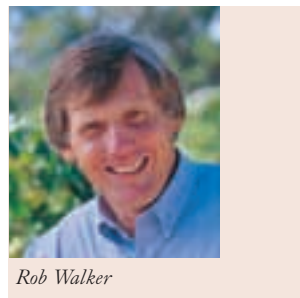
Program Manager **Dr Liz Waters** said the CRCV appreciated the efforts of the group to attend the meeting and valued its helpful and insightful comments and suggestions.

She said future meetings would focus on a review of current projects and planning for the future.

"The purpose of our next meeting will be strategic planning: to review progress of all projects, recommend continuation or cessation of projects and to suggest new initiatives," she said.

This is most likely to occur in May 2001 with the majority of projects coming to the end of their three-year cycle in 2002 and new funding submissions due in December 2001 for the following financial year.

Members of the group include: Russell Johnstone, Orlando Wyndham, Chris Brodie, Katnook Estate, Peter Leske, Nepenthe Wines, Stephen Henschke, CA Henschke & Co, Geoff Linton, S Smith & Sons, Wendy Allen, Southcorp Wines, Michael Himsworth, viticulturist, Simon Adams, Cellarmasters, Alex Sas, BRL Hardy, Stephen Pannell, BRL Hardy, Syd Kyloh, Mildara Blass and Peter Stephens, Simeon Wines.



Rob Walker

## Program 2

Program 2 matches closely with the main priorities identified by the Viticulture 2000 Group and is well balanced in terms of the sustainability issues being addressed, according to its Industry Reference Group.

Program 2 Manager, **Dr Rob Walker**, said the group saw the importance of maintaining and stepping up actions to communicate research with industry and highlighted the need to use plain English not technical language.

It was felt important messages from the trunk diseases project should be conveyed to industry as soon as possible given the potential serious impacts of these diseases.

With regard to conducting trials on grower properties, Rob said it was acknowledged that this was important and the range of trials being carried out were well designed but there was always room for critical review along the way.

"The main points raised about this were vineyard variability and its implications for trial design; that 'base' or 'control' treatment in irrigation trials should reflect best practice and the difficulties in dealing with commercial spray regimes across a whole site in disease monitoring work and the potential influence of viral agents," said Rob.

Another issue which received some attention was the choice of Chardonnay and Shiraz as the main varieties used in trials. While a slightly wider range of main varieties would have been useful, the advantage of building up a considerable body of knowledge on the key main varieties was noted.

A similar discussion occurred in relation to investigations of strategic irrigation technologies. While Partial Rootzone Drying is an irrigation technology that features prominently across a range of trial sites it was generally only one of a number of irrigation treatments being compared, with others being regulated deficit irrigation, and various forms of standard drip or undervine micro-sprinkler irrigation, said Rob.

“Since PRD is a new technology that shows much promise to increase water use efficiency and potentially improve wine quality particularly in the warmer regions, the work to optimise its application was considered very worthwhile.”

Understanding the interaction between root volume and PRD response was seen to be a good example of work aimed at maximising outcomes in terms of vine performance.

The meeting noted that there was still much to be understood in relation to the physiology of the vine, particularly in the areas of ‘root signals’, factors affecting water use efficiency, interactions with disease incidence and berry compositional characteristics affecting wine quality.

Members of the group include: Graeme Wellman, Cellarmasters, Leo Pech, grower, Liz Riley, Roger Hoare, Stanbridge Estate, Greg Johnston, Cowra Wines, Ivan Shaw, grower, Bill Wilden, BRL Hardy, Peter Hayes, Rosemount Ltd, Peter Read, grower, Barry Avery, grower, Vic Patrick, Mildara Blass Ltd and Don Lester, Orlando Wyndham.



*Simon Robinson*

### Program 3

The progress, direction and potential of the CRCV’s Molecular Improvement of Grapevines Program has been endorsed by its Industry Reference Group.

The group were “pleased with the progress to date and excited by the possibilities the research provided”, said Program 3 Manager **Dr Simon Robinson**.

“They were particularly impressed with the potential to possibly provide control of fungal pathogens, which is still some way off but achievable, and to also alter a grapevine’s architecture by introducing single genes,” he said.

Program 3’s Project Leaders gave comprehensive presentations to the Industry Reference Group which was followed by discussion.

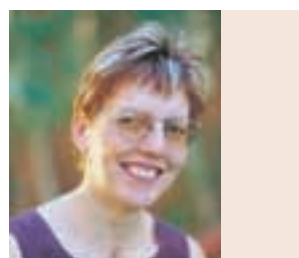
The meeting gave the CRCV an opportunity to reiterate that no genetically modified organisms were being used in the Australian wine industry, nor would be until they were deemed to be beneficial and posed no risk to consumers.

“While there was debate about whether genetically modified grapevines will ever be used in the industry it was felt that outcomes and benefits from this research would be the determining factor not the technology used,” said Simon.

“For instance a genetically modified grapevine with obvious benefits in terms of industry sustainability, production efficiency, the environment and consumers might be very acceptable.”

It was noted by the group that Program 3 was a long-term strategic research component of the CRCV that was necessary to help attract Commonwealth funding and that it was important to not only have research that delivered direct, measurable outcomes but that also generated new knowledge about grapevine physiology.

Members of the group include: Stephen Couche, Orlando Wyndham Group, Di Davidson, Davidson Viticultural Services, Richard Gibson, Southcorp Wines, Richard Hamilton, Southcorp Wines, Peter Hayes, Rosemount Estate, Prue Henschke, CA Henschke & Co, Peter Leske, Nepenthe Wines, Michael Murtagh, Rutherglen Vineyard Services, Peter Fleming, Simeon Wines and Chris Shanahan, Canberra Times.



*Libby Boschen*

### Program 4

A strategic plan for the Education and Training program has emerged from its Industry Reference Group meeting.

The group discussed the industry training and education needs analysis report, written by Peter Mansfield as part of *Project 4.3*, validated its findings and set priorities for the CRCV.

Program 4 Manager **Libby Boschen** said the group identified vocational training as a key area, highlighting the following points as high priorities:

- Swiftly implement recommended changes to Certificate Levels 1-3 which provide training and assessment standards for those at an industry entry level through to those at qualified trades-person or senior operator level.
- Conduct quantitative research on what the economic returns are of investing in education and training to help promote its benefits to industry employers and other stakeholders.
- Develop a training pathway for those undertaking advanced certificate or diploma (AQF Levels 4 & 5) qualifications, for supervisor and junior manager positions, and ensure courses lead directly into a tertiary degree.

Libby said the group rated tertiary education as fairly low on its list of priorities at this time but certainly did not dismiss it as unimportant.

“They basically said if there is a finite amount of money, we’re better off spending it where we can get maximum leverage,” said Libby.

Members of the group include: Jim Brayne, McWilliams Wines, Paul Chambers, Staughton Vale Vineyards, Tony Crawford, Tarac Australia, Garry Crittenden, Dromana Estate Vineyards, Brian Croser, Petaluma Wines, David Hayman, BRL Hardy, Rob McGavin, Jubilee Park Vineyards, Peter Milton, Southcorp Wines, Darren Pulford, Southern Wine Corporation, Richard Richardson, Delamere Vineyard, Brian Smedley, SA Wine & Brandy Industry Association, Graeme Thompson, MK Thompson & Sons and Peter Vandenberg, viticulturist.

The CRCV requires its PhD students to undertake industry placements as part of their Professional Development Program.

Discussions are taking place between the Centre and industry employers who have expressed interest and enthusiasm in accommodating some of the students



Noel Ainsworth

## Viticare Initiative

The Viticare Guidance Group received a briefing about the initiatives’ three individual projects - Viticare Member Group Network, Environmental Management Systems and On-Farm Trials - and their progress at its first meeting.

Viticare coordinator **Noel Ainsworth** said the group felt the balance between offering viticultural knowledge as opposed to environmental knowledge needed to be flagged from the outset of the Viticare Member Group Network project.

Noel said the initial focus with each network member group would be general viticultural knowledge with scope to develop a focus on improving the sustainability of viticultural production systems if required.

He said the Guidance Group saw the Viticare Member Group Network as not just delivering more information to growers but about finding out what growers wanted and delivering the information required.

With regard to the Environmental Management Systems (EMS) project there was general support for its progress and direction.

The need for industry consultation and endorsement was highlighted and it was regarded as essential that the EMS work dovetail with the Strategy 2025 environmental policy additions for the wine industry.

In terms of Viticare’s On-Farm Trials project, a key point of discussion was the intention to have local Viticare groups driving the topics based on what they determined to be of strategic importance.

Noel said the group agreed that the practical needs to gear up the project meant establishing trials quickly with individual growers.

“Beyond this, there is a need for existing on-farm trial participants to be in the Viticare network to ensure links are established and maintained, ie only Viticare Member Groups can have on-farm trials,” he said.

Members of the Viticare Guidance Group include: Hugh Armstrong Southcorp, Fiona Wigg, Southcorp, David Shearer, DNRE, DeAnn Glenn, GWRDC, Rhett Marlowe, WGCA, Anne-Maree Boland, DNRE, Brian Ferry, grower, Linda Bowes, SAWBIA, Peter Hayes, Rosemount Ltd, Lou Cremasco, grower, and Geoff Hardy, grower. The only member unable to attend was Peter Merriman, DNRE.

to enable them to gain a greater insight into the practical applications of their research projects in the field.

The companies involved are excited at the potential benefits of tapping into expertise relevant to their viticultural needs.

If you are interested in having a PhD student spend time with your company, please contact Libby Boschen on (08) 8373 7090.

## CRCV taking lead role in environmental management



David Baker

The CRCV is playing a key role in ensuring the development of an approach to Environmental Management Systems that is appropriate and practical for Australia's wine and grape industry and has its endorsement.

These are the words of the CRCV's Environmental Management Systems Officer, **David Baker**, who delivered a paper recently about EMS to the First National Wine Industry Environment Conference and Exhibition held in Adelaide.

Put simply, Environmental Management Systems (EMS) are tools for building environmental considerations into the day-to-day conduct of a business, like an accounting package, export schedule or quality assurance system.

David said the CRCV, with the support of the GWRDC, had taken the lead in appointing him as an Environmental Management Systems Officer to raise the industry's awareness of these systems and design a model specifically for the wine and grape industry.

He said because of increased demands on industry, by governments, consumers and other key stakeholders, for satisfactory environmental performance a perfect opportunity existed for the wine and grape industry to be proactive and set its own criteria and agenda before it was determined by outside interests.

David said EMS are an increasingly popular means for addressing the need to demonstrate satisfactory and improved environmental performance both in Australia and overseas.

"In the case of the Australian wine and grape industry, some sectors have already begun to take this path however adoption of EMS in the industry is in an early phase and the industry needs a clear policy on Environmental Management Systems," he said.

"Without strong industry direction there is likely to be a lack of uniformity in any overall approach, which may have adverse implications if the industry wants to have a clear and recognised identity as "clean and green". An industry - developed framework may also represent better use of the resources of the members of the industry."

As part of the Viticare program of the CRCV, a discussion paper is being prepared outlining the key issues that the industry faces with respect to EMS following a review of current developments and consultation with participants at all levels of the industry.

An industry survey will be disseminated before Christmas seeking views on the direction that should be taken and to gauge support for an industry endorsed approach to environmental management.

**David Baker can be contacted on (08) 8340 0506 or email – [dbaker@senet.com.au](mailto:dbaker@senet.com.au)**

The potential benefits of having an effective EMS in place, include that it:

- Ensures long-term sustainability to the resource (and the business)
- Provides evidence of responsible and effective management with respect to environmental issues
- Provides evidence of reasonable care and regulatory compliance (proof that obeying laws, reduces unintentional non-compliance, can act as own whistle blower)
- Maintains and/or improves relations with community, government, other growers, industry, environmental organisations
- Leads to enhancement of image (become advocates for the environment)
- Has the potential for value adding from addition and/or identification of an environmental premium to output
- May act as entry ticket to markets
- May lead to potential operational efficiencies & savings
- Facilitates obtaining of permits, licenses & authorisations
- Can reduce the number and magnitude of adverse incidents. This will reduce the risk of damage and/or liability, which in turn could lead to a reduction in insurance premiums
- Demonstrates due diligence in legal matters
- Places the organisation in a position to call upon or even insist upon improved environmental performance from other organisations (eg. other growers, wineries, government)
- Reduces the likelihood of increased government regulation for well-managed organisations/industries
- May lead to development of solutions to environmental problems which may have commercial benefits.

## Argentina seeks Australian viticultural advice



*New vineyard in Tupungato with drip irrigation.*

Argentina is looking towards Australia for advice on developing more sophisticated vineyard management practices.

And CRCV Program 2 researcher **Dr Peter Dry** believes there could be opportunities for the CRCV in terms of research and education following his ten day trip to the wine producing city of Mendoza, Argentina, at the end of September.

“There are more hectares of grapes in the Mendoza region alone than Australia. Argentina is a significant wine producing nation,” Peter said.

“However, in terms of technology and education the industry is not particularly advanced and this could provide some opportunities for the CRCV to export its expertise in these areas.”

Peter was a keynote speaker at the Argentine Horticultural Congress and spent a number of days with growers delivering workshops on irrigation techniques, particularly Partial Rootzone Drying, as well as canopy management, pruning and trellising.

He said that grapes were hand picked because labour costs were low. Only a small number of vineyards were drip irrigated and these were mostly new ones. Although rainfall is low in Mendoza, there is a plentiful supply of bore and river water that is used for flood or furrow irrigation. However, Peter said the industry is becoming more aware of the need to prevent salinity, to increase water efficiency using various irrigation techniques and to ensure the sustainability of the industry for decades to come.

“Australia and Argentina have a number of things in common such as climate and similar soil and water issues and because of this the viticultural industry in Mendoza is starting to seek future collaboration with Australia,” he said.

Peter also believes Australian capabilities in education could be valuable to Argentina as its sector is under developed. “The University of Cuyo in Mendoza which teaches viticulture and oenology has only just started offering post-graduate courses and currently rely heavily on visiting lecturers from France,” he said.

### Diary Dates for 2001

#### Program 3 – Molecular Improvement of Grapevines – presentations

Presentations about Program 3’s research projects have been made to many grapegrower and winemaker groups this year with more planned for 2001, particularly in VIC, NSW and WA.

If you are in the process of planning your Annual General Meeting for next year and would like someone from the CRCV’s Program 3 to present to your group, please contact Dr Simon Robinson or Ms Angela Gackle on (08) 8303 8600 or email [angela.gackle@pi.csiro.au](mailto:angela.gackle@pi.csiro.au).

#### International Wine Tourism Conference & Expo

Where: Margaret River, Western Australia

Date: 25-28 March, 2001

Further details: (08) 9277 8448 or [winetour@c-m-s.com.au](mailto:winetour@c-m-s.com.au)

#### Barossa Vintage Festival

Where: Barossa Valley

Date: 16-22 April, 2001

Further details: (08) 8563 0663 or Freecall: 1800 812 662

“A number of people I spoke to in Argentina in wine research and education expressed strong interest in creating links with Australia and this could provide us with some interesting options in the future.”

**For more information contact Peter Dry on (08) 8303 7374.**