



Media Release

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## **National Wine Body Establishes Base in Tasmania**

Australia's leading wine research organisation, the Australian Wine Research Institute, has established a base in Tasmania – the first time the AWRI has expanded outside of its South Australian headquarters.

The move was prompted by the success of the State's peak wine industry body, Wine Industry Tasmania to attract funding for pioneering research into viticultural and winemaking aspects of sparkling wine and pinot noir table winegrape varieties – the future for cool climate wine production in Australia.

The AWRI has appointed Senior Research Scientist, Dr Bob Damberg, to commence wine research work based at the Tasmanian Institute of Agricultural Research at the University of Tasmania's Sandy Bay campus.

Managing Director of the AWRI, Dr Sakkie Pretorius, said the appointment of Dr Damberg was part of AWRI's future business development.

"The AWRI's business plan outlined opportunities for the AWRI to create even closer working relationships with regional grapegrowers and wine producers," he said.

"Specifically we identified the need for regional 'nodes' to complement the AWRI's well-recognised roadshow program and since that time, we have been liaising with state-based grape and wine associations to identify opportunities for fostering regional R&D, technology transfer and extension activities via these nodes.

"As Wine Industry Tasmania is currently spearheading a significant cool-climate wine research project, the AWRI took the decision to create the first of these planned 'nodes' in Hobart, and we look forward to working closely with local producers," Dr Pretorius said.

Chairman of Wine Industry Tasmania, Mr Graeme Lynch, said the establishment of the AWRI's first national 'node' was made possible with funding received from AusIndustry which is in the Federal Government's Department of Innovation, Industry, Science and Research.

"The AWRI assisted Wine Industry Tasmania in applying to AusIndustry, under its Industry Cooperative Innovation Program for research funding to improve the quality of cool-climate sparkling and pinot noir wines," Mr Lynch said.

Mr Lynch said a joint application was prepared by a Tasmanian-based consortium in late 2007, headed by Wine Industry Tasmania which included the Tasmanian Institute of Agricultural Research, Tamar Ridge Estates, Croplands Pty Ltd, Flextank Pty Ltd and the AWRI.

The application was successful with AusIndustry committing \$900,000 to the research project.

"This is the first time that significant funding has been received for cool-climate wine research and it will be matched dollar for dollar by our consortium partners – making a total of \$1.8M over the project's three-year lifespan," Mr Lynch said.

“While Dr Dambergs appointment is initially only for the duration of the project, we would like to see the position extended beyond that timeframe, with a view to setting up a permanent ‘node’ in Tasmania.”

Research Project Manager, Dr Richard Smart, viticulture consultant to Tamar Ridge Estate, said the appointment of Dr Dambergs as the inaugural Node Research Scientist was a significant milestone for the project.

“We are very fortunate to have a scientist of Dr Damberg’s calibre involved with in this research,” Dr Smart said.

Initially Dr Dambergs will focus on the study of Pinot Noir winemaking methods, with a view to maximising quality, while increasing efficiency and he will also provide input to projects relating to sparkling wine production and maximising grape quality in the vineyard.

“Importantly, these projects have very practical outcomes and aim to benefit cool-climate grapegrowers and winemakers by providing guidelines to enhance grape and wine quality in the production of sparkling wines and Pinot Noir table wines.

“This is good news for our state’s wine industry as Pinot Noir and sparkling wines are two icon styles for Tasmania,” Dr Smart said.

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For further information and/or to arrange an interview, contact:

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