



## **Environmental Management in Viticulture – Langhorne Creek**

The Environmental Management in Viticulture – Langhorne Creek trial builds on the established Angas Bremer Code of Practice for managing irrigation at Langhorne Creek. Funded by the Murray Darling Basin Commission (MDBC) under the Watermark program, the objective of the trial is to develop a regional framework for improving environmental stewardship offering tiered levels of recognition linked to catchment targets. As this is a variation from a traditional ISO14001 style Environmental Management System (EMS), the term Environmental Stewardship Program (ESP) has been adopted. The program includes methodology for assessing the environmental risks of viticultural activities, the determination of a series of environmental performance targets that both the region and individual growers can aspire to achieve, locally developed environmental standards and seven performance and processed based steps or ‘Levels’ designed to give recognition for participants efforts. Best Management Practices (BMPs) underpinning the framework, developed with the support of local Natural Resource Management (NRM) officers, are in turn designed to achieve NRM/Catchment outcomes. Environmental issues identified by the growers are addressed using the BMPs. The requirement of annual review provides for continuous improvement.

The MDBC is seeking to test whether creating a recognised approach to environmental stewardship and raising standards of vineyard based environmental management is a cost effective way to achieve environmental outcomes. The 3 year project commenced in 2002 and is guided by a Steering Committee representing a broad range of interests. 26 participants from 20 vineyards are involved with greater than 60% of the area planted to vines in the region involved.

Systems developed by the trial have allowed a number of other community environmental concerns to be addressed, including BMPs for aquifer storage and recovery and irrigation by flood diversion addressing biodiversity issues of local Redgum swamps.

In 2005 the Winemakers Federation of Australia plan will introduce an industry accreditation system – Australian Wine Industry Stewardship (AWIS) to provide evidence of environmental stewardship. It is anticipated that the features of the local system will meet AWIS requirements.

CRC for Viticulture has worked closely with the trial and has provided a risk assessment tool, VERA plus corresponding Good Environmental Management (GEM) guides.

Draft BMPs developed by the trial for the Langhorne Creek region are available.

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