

NEWS RELEASE

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The Australian Wine
Research Institute

Cheers to 60 years supporting Australian wine

The Australian Wine Research Institute (AWRI) today celebrates its 60th birthday – 60 years of world class research and technical support for Australia’s wine industry.

Based at the Waite Research Precinct in Urrbrae, SA since its beginnings, the AWRI is an independent national organisation, serving growers and winemakers across all of Australia’s wine regions. From just a handful of employees in 1955, the AWRI now employs 115 scientists, winemakers, viticulturists and technical staff all working for the benefit of the Australian grape and wine producers.

The AWRI has supported the Australian wine industry through a period of enormous change and growth. In 1955 Australia crushed around 127,000 tonnes of grapes, a high percentage of which were made into fortified wines. Now the Australian industry crushes around 1.7 million tonnes, and makes wines across a wide range of varieties and styles.

Commenting on the milestone, AWRI Managing Director, Dr Dan Johnson, said “The AWRI is proud of the scientific achievements that have underpinned the Australian wine industry’s success over the past 60 years. It’s no accident that Australian wine has a global reputation for excellence and innovation.”

“In the end all of the science comes down to supporting our wine community to make wines that consumers want to buy and enjoy drinking.”



Dr Dan Johnson, AWRI Managing Director, with barrels of the AWRI’s 60th birthday wine. Photo: Eric Wilkes

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“Many people and organisations have contributed to the AWRI’s 60-year history. I’d like to thank past and present staff and directors, our funding bodies (in particular the Australian Grape and Wine Authority) and our scientific collaborators across the world.”

“Most importantly, I thank the grapegrowers and winemakers of Australia and their representative bodies for their continuing support. We look forward to working with them on the next 60 years of scientific breakthroughs.”

Some key AWRI achievements over the 60 years include:

- solving the spoilage issues that plagued the industry in its early days exporting wine
- breakthroughs in understanding and measuring red wine colour and tannin
- world-first research on wine closures that led to the widespread adoption of screwcaps
- identification of the compound that makes some Shiraz wine smell like pepper
- sequencing the genome of the spoilage yeast that makes wine taste like Band-Aids
- developing the southern hemisphere’s largest collection of grape and wine technical resources

A number of activities will take place in 2015 to mark the AWRI’s 60th birthday:

- the making of a commemorative 2015 vintage wine
- publication of a special issue of the Australian Journal of Grape and Wine Research
- a dinner at the Mortlock Library for past and present directors of the AWRI
- a wine education event for all staff, led by Aaron Brasher from Wine Australia and wine writer Tony Love

For more information, please contact Ella Robinson, Communication Manager, AWRI on 0402 402 121 or ella.robinson@awri.com.au.

The Australian Wine Research Institute is the Australian grape and wine industry’s own research organisation. It supports a sustainable and successful grape and wine industry through world class research, practical solutions and knowledge transfer.