

## **'I heard it on the grapevine'**

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**For immediate release**

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### **Examining long-term effects of deficit irrigation**

"Deficit irrigation over the long-term is an issue local horticultural growers will face in the coming seasons," said Dr Everard Edwards, a research scientist with CSIRO Plant Industry, Merbein. Dr Edwards is currently working on a project to examine the continuing effects of decreased irrigation to grapevines.

Cabernet Sauvignon vines have been managed to assess the effects of water stress and seasonal temperatures, Dr Edwards explained, "The research being conducted is particularly connected to crop development, fruit maturation and long-term vine productivity."

"Recent results have demonstrated that water stress can affect vine canopy size and function, crop development and sugar accumulation, wine aroma, flavour and colour. Impacts of significant seasonal conditions, particularly temperature, have previously been established on the site."

The project, funded by the Grape and Wine Research Development Council (GWRDC), is part of the Soil and Water Initiative, building on previous viticulture research aimed at development of integrated strategies to manage seasonal variation in wine grape maturation and to enhance wine flavour.

The trial vineyard is situated on the Deakin Estate, Wingara property, Dr Edwards said, "The experimental site has been utilised for these studies over a number of seasons, making the vineyard ideal to modify to examine whether current deficit irrigation is economically sustainable in the longer term."

Dr Edwards is determined to refine vineyard management systems, "The aim is to deliver grapes of specified quality and economically acceptable yields, while ensuring sustainability of the vineyard soil and water resources."

Dr Edwards will present the research outcomes of the first year of his five year project at the Riverlink Wine Grape Symposium tomorrow, Thursday 14 June at Sunraysia Institute of TAFE, registration is free of charge and includes lunch. For details see, [www.riverlink.gov.au](http://www.riverlink.gov.au) or contact Lee Byrne, Riverlink Communication and Development Officer on 03 5051 4569.

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For media enquiries, contact: Lee Byrne, Riverlink Communication and Development Officer,  
P 03 5051 4569 M 0428 530 842 E [lee.byrne@dpi.vic.gov.au](mailto:lee.byrne@dpi.vic.gov.au)