

Media Release

Ms Mary-Anne Thomas MP
Minister for Regional Development
Minister for Agriculture



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MORNINGTON PENINSULA'S VINES DECLARED PHYLLOXERA FREE

Mornington Peninsula vineyards are officially free from a deadly grapevine pest, thanks to the hard work of dedicated survey teams.

Minister for Agriculture Mary-Anne Thomas today visited Montalto winery in Red Hill to announce the region is free from phylloxera, congratulating Mornington Peninsula Wine and the Mornington Peninsula Shire which helped verify the region's phylloxera-free status.

Phylloxera is a very small, yellow insect that feeds on rooted vines, leading to a decline in the grapevine's health and potentially death. It is the main threat to grapevines in Australia and can decimate crops.

In 2017 the Andrews Labor Government provided \$1.8 million through its *Tackling Phylloxera Program* to survey the region for the grapevine pest, enabling the region to transition from an undetermined status to phylloxera-free.

Over the past four years, survey teams have meticulously inspected hundreds of grapevines, totalling 965 hectares, for the presence of phylloxera. There was no evidence to verify that the pest was present in the region.

The completion of the project is a major milestone in the five-year *Victorian Wine Strategy 2017-2021*

This formal declaration enables the Mornington Peninsula viticultural industry to trade more easily with other regions. It also gives growers confidence to continue to implement farm-gate biosecurity strategies to keep the pest out.

The *Victorian Budget 2019-20* invested \$142.5 million to boost the state's biosecurity systems.

The funding backs Victoria's Agriculture Strategy, ensuring local growers are well placed to respond to biosecurity risks while promoting and building confidence in the sector. For more information, visit agriculture.vic.gov.au/tacklingphylloxera.

Quotes attributable to Minister for Agriculture Mary-Anne Thomas

"We are proud to support the growth and prosperity of the Mornington Peninsula's wine industry and we thank all those involved for their work to help declare the region phylloxera free."

"I encourage all grape growers, vignerons and vineyard workers to keep up their good biosecurity practices to ensure the region remains free of this deadly pest."

Quote attributable to Member for Nepean Chris Brayne

"The ongoing efforts of Mornington Peninsula wine grape growers to implement strong biosecurity practices have been instrumental in achieving this feat and protecting the region's internationally renowned wine industry."

Quote attributable to Mornington Peninsula Vignerons Association CEO Olivia Barrie

"After four consecutive years of inspection of all commercial vineyards, we're pleased this devastating pest has not been found in the region – it highlights the responsibility we have to protect our vineyards to keep phylloxera out."

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