



The Place To Be

Media release

From the Minister for Agriculture

Saturday, 21 June, 2008

GRAMPIANS-PYRENEES NOW PHYLLOXERA FREE

The future of the viticulture industry within the Grampians-Pyrenees region is more secure with its announcement as a Phylloxera Exclusion Zone (PEZ).

At Warrenmang Vineyard near Moonambel, Agriculture Minister and Member for Ripon Joe Helper said the Grampians-Pyrenees viticulture region was now recognised nationally as having equal PEZ status to other areas around Australia.

Grapevine phylloxera is a root and leaf feeding aphid which affects viticulture and nursery industries in several Victorian regions and many of the world's wine-growing areas.

"The Brumby Government has delivered on its commitment to support improvements to interstate market access for Victorian growers – particularly in South Australia and New South Wales," Mr Helper said.

"By achieving PEZ status, Grampians-Pyrenees viticulturists are able to move whole grapes to and from other PEZs.

"This will provide a greater degree of flexibility for industry, while removing financial constraints associated with crushing berries and the disinfestation of bins and used machinery.

"A PEZ also enhances the region's level of biosecurity against other vine-related pests by regulating the movement of vine material, grapes and machinery."

Mr Helper said the process to gain PEZ status had taken three years and was guided by a committee which included the Pyrenees Vignerons Association, Pyrenees Grape Growers Association and Grampians Winemakers Incorporated.

"Industry and community participation was critical to the success of the re-zoning process, which involved comprehensive surveys to identify and inspect vine plantings in the area, and we thank industry for helping achieve these results," he said.

The surveys showed that all vineyards within the zone were free of phylloxera, which will enable growers within the district to move grapes into any Victorian PEZ and possibly into South Australia.

"As demonstrated in the newly launched *Future Farming Strategy*, the Brumby Government has committed \$3 million additional funding to continue development of PEZs in Victoria with the aim of having all the west of the state declared a PEZ."

Phylloxera reduces root growth and weakens or even kills vines. It is most commonly spread through the transportation of materials that have come into contact with phylloxera, such as grapevine cuttings and rootlings, whole grapes, soil and used agricultural equipment.