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## **MEDIA RELEASE**

### **Release of 2008 AWIS National Report**

The 2008 results of the Australian Wine Industry Stewardship (AWIS) program have been released by the Winemakers' Federation of Australia.

The AWIS program, which commenced in 2005, is the national wine industry's environmental stewardship program. Following successful pilots in the lead up to the 2006 vintage, AWIS has now been implemented nationally for two years, enabling a comparison of year on year results for the first time.

Director, Natural Resources at the Winemakers' Federation, Amy Russell, said the program is based on a one-page vineyard practice survey included in company spray diaries or used as a stand-alone survey by smaller producers.

"Survey questions are framed around grower practices that are known to contribute to environmental outcomes. From a simple practice like soil moisture monitoring, we can infer contributions to water use efficiency, reduced transport of salts and nutrients offsite in excess water runoff, and even reduced greenhouse gas emissions by avoiding waterlogged soils," Ms Russell said.

"The 2008 results show improvements across most indicators - more growers are participating in sustainable vineyard management workshops, developing property management plans, keeping native plants along creeks and waterways, and using efficient drip irrigation."

"In light of the difficult conditions being experienced by many growers as a result of the drought in the Murray Darling Basin and ongoing supply imbalances, grower commitment to long term environmental sustainability is to be applauded," she said.

The release of the 2008 AWIS National Report will be followed by a breakdown of results by region, to be made available to Members of the Winemakers' Federation of Australia.

The AWIS program will be continued for 2009, while the industry finalises development of an expanded format to incorporate an environmental assurance scheme for use by growers and winemakers. Building on AWIS, the new scheme is called Australian Wine Environmental Stewardship (AWES) and is due for release in 2009.

The 2008 AWIS National Report will be available online at [www.wfa.org.au/environment.htm](http://www.wfa.org.au/environment.htm).

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