



MEDIA RELEASE

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BANROCK STATION'S \$110,000 DONATIONS BOOST TO NATIONAL WETLANDS PROJECTS

South Australia's Banrock Station has today marked World Wetlands Day (2 February) with the announcement of new donations totalling \$110,000 for key wetland projects across New South Wales, Victoria, Queensland and Western Australia.

This takes to more than \$2.3 million, the total donations made by Banrock Station over the past 10 years towards the protection and rehabilitation of global wetlands.

The Company's assistance to Australian wetlands now totals 22 separate projects following today's announcement.

"If we as a community are genuine with our concerns about the environment, it is crucial more ailing wetlands are identified and given the assistance they require – before it is too late and they are lost forever," Banrock Station Manager, Mr Tony Sharley, said today.

"We need to understand the integral role wetlands play in protecting our rivers and quality of water, and how they can add value to our towns and rural landscapes," he said.

"Wetlands are the kidneys of our land, so it is crucial that we restore them and continue to protect and nourish them."

Mr Sharley said four new projects – the Kooragang Wetland in New South Wales, Lake Mokoan and Gellibrand wetland in Victoria, and Houghton Winery in the Jane Brook Catchment in Western Australia – would each receive \$15,000 for wetland creation and rehabilitation work.

Five other current projects in South Australia, Queensland and New South Wales will also receive a funding boost in recognition of the vital wetland conservation work they undertake.

Today's announcement continues Banrock Station's long association with Landcare Australia.

"A 2002 audit estimated that 50 per cent of wetlands in Australia have been destroyed since European settlement, and many other wetlands have been severely modified," Landcare Australia Chief Executive Officer, Mr Brian Scarsbrick, said today.

"Wetlands provide homes to some incredible bird species and fish populations, ...these projects are a great step towards restoring some degraded areas, and also highlighting to the public the importance of wetlands."

About Banrock Station

Banrock Station Wines - one of the fastest growing brands in the major wine drinking countries of the world - is recognised internationally for its pioneering concept of funding environmental projects by donating part proceeds of every worldwide purchase of its wines.

Since its launch nearly 10 years ago, Banrock Station Wines has helped restore and/or rehabilitate more than 54 wetlands throughout the world, including six in South Australia.

The jewel in the Banrock Station crown is its world-renowned wetlands at Kingston-on-Murray, on the Murray River, in South Australia's Riverland, which consist of 1375 hectares of ecologically significant land, including 1068 hectares of River Murray floodplain wetlands.

In 2002, Banrock Station won the most prestigious wetland conservation award in the world – the Ramsar Wetland Conservation Award – for its commitment to wetland restoration.

The wetlands provide a natural habitat for two nationally vulnerable species – the Regent Parrot and the Southern Bell Frog, as well as supporting 166 bird species, including several migratory birds – the Great Egret, White-bellied Sea Eagle, Greenshank, Red-necked Stint, Long-toed Stint, Sharp-tailed Sandpiper, Fork-tailed Swift and Caspian Tern.

“The Banrock Station wetlands are a shining example of how, through proper and considered environmental management, we can reduce our dependency on major waterways like the River Murray, itself under threat because of the drought and years of unsustainable development,” Mr Sharley said.

“There is no reason why the achievements and successes of Banrock Station cannot be mirrored many times throughout the world,” he said.

“All it needs is more and more people to recognize the commitment they can make to this important environmental cause when next they buy wine.”

New Projects announced today – each to receive \$15,000

The “Feathers, Frogs and Fins” project at **Kooragang** was launched in 1993 with the aim of rehabilitating 1590 hectares of degraded, but important wetland. The area is home to 26 threatened species and also hosts 30 migratory wading bird species, as well as a significant population of the endangered green and gold bell frog.

New wetlands and important redgum woodlands will be created at **Lake Mokoan**, with the aim of increasing bird populations and developing better habitats for the golden perch and Murray cod. Local Landcare groups and businesses, including three vineyards, are all assisting in this ground-breaking project which could set a national precedent for decommissioning water storages.

At **Gellibrand**, only several kilometres from the Twelve Apostles along Australia's famous Great Ocean Road, a natural wonderland is set to be opened up with walking tracks and signage for visitors to experience a unique wetland region.

The **Jane Brook Catchment** group, working with The Houghton Wine Company, plan to control the impact of environmental weeds and land use impacts on their local wetlands by revegetating large areas, and erecting educational signage to instruct visitors on the special species and plant-life found there, including the long-necked turtle, pacific black duck and blue-billed duck.

