



MEDIA RELEASE

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BANROCK STATION LEADS THE WORLD WITH NEW CONSERVATION DONATIONS MILESTONE

An Australian company has set an historic milestone in donations by the global wine industry to world-wide environmental projects.

Banrock Station Wines announced today that donations from the sale of its wines to global conservation had raced through the \$3 million mark - setting a significant landmark for the world wine industry.

Already one of Australia's most popular wine brands, Banrock Station in the 1990s pioneered the concept of part proceeds from wine sales being donated to help fund environmental projects.

The \$3 million achievement announced today means that sales of Banrock Station Wines throughout the world have helped to support more than 60 conservation projects in 11 countries, including the United States, the United Kingdom, Europe, Canada, Kenya, Sweden, New Zealand and the Netherlands.

The milestone coincides with celebrations this month to mark the 10th anniversary of Banrock Station Wines' first vintage.

"This new international benchmark announced today is the culmination of a successful strategy that has played a key role in bringing the wine industry closer than ever to environmental projects throughout the world," Banrock Station Manager, Mr Tony Sharley, said.

"That makes perfect sense because wine is a product of nature," he said.

"If not for donations from sales of this wine brand, many of the wetlands we have helped restore – and the wildlife that depends so heavily upon them – would have continued to decline.

"Our global commitment to the environment will continue unabated for many generations to come, to the betterment of communities and the environment throughout the world.

"Consistent with our philosophy at Banrock Station, which includes state-of-the-art viticulture, Banrock's global conservation program is funding projects for wetlands rehabilitation, river restoration, endangered species recovery programs and environmental education.

"Everyone associated with Banrock Station feels an immense sense of pride and satisfaction knowing a South Australian wine is leading the global wine industry in its commitment to the environment."

Today's announcement caps an incredible year of success for Banrock Station Wines, based in South Australia's Riverland.

Last month, it announced in conjunction with the South Australian Government that the River Murray would receive vital extra environmental flows in a \$1 million partnership between the two parties.

Under the agreement, about 650 megalitres - or 650 million litres - of water a year will flow into the River Murray as additional environmental flows.

Removal of pumps at Banrock Station will allow its wetland to dry out naturally in the warmer months, significantly reducing the amount of water that evaporates from the permanently full wetland at the internationally-renowned Ramsar-listed site.

(Ramsar is the world's peak wetlands conservation organisation. In 2002, Banrock Station was awarded the Ramsar Wetland Conservation Award - the most prestigious international honour of its type - for its commitment to wetland restoration.)

In July this year, Banrock Station launched one of the most extensive and ambitious breeding operations undertaken in Australia, with the release of six endangered bilbies on the property.

These threatened native animals not seen in parts of Australia for nearly 100 years were reintroduced into their natural habitat as part of the *Banrock Station Threatened Species Recovery Program*.

It is the first such program in the world to be undertaken on a Ramsar-listed wetland, and also the first in Australia – possibly the world - on land fronting a river floodplain ecosystem, namely the River Murray.

Background

Banrock Station Wines is recognised internationally for its pioneering concept of funding environmental projects by donating part proceeds of every worldwide purchase of its wines.

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

Three years ago, 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 replicated 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.”