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DE BORTOLI WINES SUSTAINABILITY TRACK RECORD THE FIRST TO GO PLATINUM IN NSW

De Bortoli Wines has today been awarded NSW's first Sustainability Advantage Platinum Project certificate, in recognition of outstanding environmental leadership and commitment to innovation.

The certificate recognises 'The De Bortoli Method', a unique potassium recovery system designed to eliminate the environmental impact of potassium build up in soil and significantly reduce dependence on imported caustic cleaning agents.

Sustainability Advantage is the NSW Government's flagship program, offered via the Office of Environment and Heritage (OEH), which encourages and enables sustainable best practice in the NSW business community. De Bortoli Wines is one of just 12 NSW companies (and the only winery) to achieve Gold Partner recognition, and is now the first to attain a Platinum Project.

The OEH presented the Platinum Project certificate to the De Bortoli Wines Environment Team today at a ceremony at the family-owned business's Bilbul Estate near Griffith.

"De Bortoli Wines is widely recognised as a leader in the business community for its demonstrated commitment to sustainable production and consumption," said Tom Grosskopf, Director, Metropolitan Branch, NSW OEH.

"With this Platinum Project, which is circular by design, De Bortoli Wines should consider itself as a world leader in the pursuit of beyond zero waste and zero harm."

The De Bortoli Method is the culmination of five years of research and development, and is one of numerous innovative sustainability practices De Bortoli Wines has implemented over the past decade, as it strives to become a 'Zero Waste Winery'. Initiatives include wise water management, energy efficiency and improved waste management.

"Our underlying philosophy is that it is up to this generation to manage our resources carefully for the future generations to come," said Darren De Bortoli, Managing Director of De Bortoli Wines. "Our ultimate aim is to eliminate waste to landfill from all aspects of viticulture and wine making, and our culture of continuous improvement drives us to explore new and innovative approaches to resource efficiency and waste minimisation.

"Great wines begin in the vineyard but it requires everyone in the business to focus on what they can do to support the process, right down to minimising our carbon footprint."

De Bortoli's potassium recovery system utilises electrolysis to recover potassium from spent winery wash water and produces a cleaning solution (potassium hydroxide) for reuse at the winery. It is designed to extend the life of the business's wastewater farm, which was established in 2005 when the winery switched from sodium based cleaning agents to potassium based cleaning agents to lessen the winery's impact on the environment. Fodder and grain crops are grown using the winery's wastewater and are sold to offset the majority of wastewater management costs. The De Bortoli Method aims to decrease the tonnage of potassium irrigated on the farm to equal the amount of potassium removed by cropping.

This technology has the potential for commercial application across the wine industry or for other manufacturers that use caustic cleaners. In addition to improving wastewater recycling, by reducing the usage of imported caustics, it has the potential to deliver significant savings and lower greenhouse gas emissions.

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