

Protocols for fire managers to minimise smoke taint in wine

AGRICULTURE VICTORIA

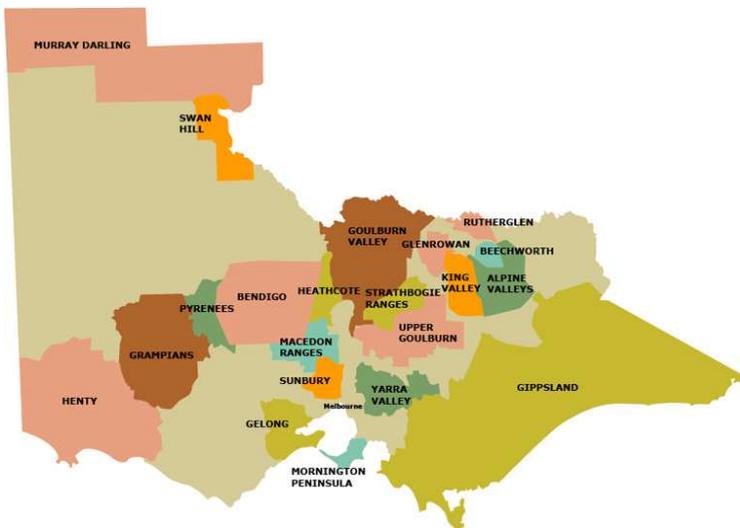
Information sheet 5 of a series of 5



Controlled burns at any time during the grape growing season may result in the absorption of smoke taint compounds into berries and leaves. While the optimum time for prescribed burning is in late summer or early autumn, this coincides with key berry development phases which is when most grape varieties are very susceptible to smoke taint.

Wine grape production is a valuable industry to Victoria. It provides local employment and supports many regional communities through tourism. The following protocols aim to provide advice to fire managers on how to reduce the risk of berries absorbing smoke from prescribed burns and how to minimize smoke taint compounds in wine.

- Identify and contact vineyards and wineries located close to DELWP land where controlled burns are likely to occur.



- Conduct twice-yearly meetings with local and regional wine industry associations (see map) to discuss the current Fire Operations Plan (FOP) for the region.
- Invite growers and industry to raise concerns to DELWP over controlled burns when FOP's are released in August.
- Encourage growers who are concerned about specific burns to use the Planned Burn Notification System (PBNS) on the DELWP website to see when burns are planned and if necessary to set up automatic notification about timing of specific burns.
- Update vineyards and wineries prior to burns so that DELWP is informed of seasonal issues that may assist fire managers with planning and undertaking burns. Continued communication may give fire managers the opportunity to burn in other areas or to undertake extra burns following an early grape harvest.
- Plan to avoid burns creating smoke that immediately drifts into a vineyard, as research has shown that this will dramatically increase the chance of smoke taint.
- Avoid repeated exposure of a vineyard to smoke during the season, as research has also shown that smoke taint has a cumulative effect over time.
- Prioritise burns so they occur after harvest in areas considered to be at high risk of contaminating vineyards with smoke taint.
- Monitor weather patterns to avoid inversion layers and wind moving smoke into grape growing areas.
- Conduct smoke modelling to estimate smoke dispersion during and after burns.

For more information, please contact the Project Leader, DEDJTR Victoria – Centre for Expertise in Smoke Taint Research, Agriculture Research Branch on 136186 or DELWP.

This document is also available in PDF format at www.victoriangovernmentdepartment.vic.gov.au

First published: August 2016