



The Hon Robyn Parker MP

Minister for the Environment

Minister for Heritage

MEDIA RELEASE

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HISTORIC SHIRAZ VINES PLANTED IN BOTANIC GARDENS

Environment Minister Robyn Parker today commemorated Australia's most planted wine variety, Shiraz, by planting cuttings that date back to 1867 in the herb garden at the Royal Botanic Gardens, Sydney.

The Shiraz vines date back to 1867 and are being given to the Gardens by Tyrrell's Wines, so they can be preserved for posterity in the nation's first botanic garden.

"The first European farm in Australia was established in 1788 at the Gardens site, commencing its long history of collection and study of plants. These cuttings are from the oldest producing Shiraz vines in the Hunter Valley and most likely in NSW," Ms Parker said.

"As the oldest scientific institution in Australia, the Gardens have always played an important role in the acclimatisation of plants from other regions.

"As the Member for Maitland it is wonderful the Royal Botanic Gardens and the Hunter Valley can be linked through today's planting.

"The Hunter region is the second-most visited tourist destination in NSW, while the Royal Botanic Gardens is the most visited botanic garden in the world," she said.

Ms Parker explained that the planting of the Shiraz vine in the European medicinal and culinary herb section of the garden is thematically appropriate due to the early usage of grapes for medicinal purposes

"European folk healers traditionally used grape leaves and sap to treat a range of conditions including skin and eye diseases, inflammation and pain.

"The medicinal role of wine dates back to 2200 BC making it the world's oldest documented man-made medicine."

Winemaker Bruce Tyrrell said Shiraz is Australia's most planted variety and accounts for at least 40 per cent of all land under vine.

"The age of our vineyards and the integrity of the source of these Shiraz vines makes our association with the Royal Botanic Gardens and Domain Trust, as its official wine partner, the perfect fit," Mr Tyrrell said.

"Shiraz has proved extraordinarily adaptable to the vast range of climate and soil, with a unique ability to reflect conditions without losing varietal integrity."

Photos for media - <http://www.flickr.com/photos/botanic-gardens-sydney/sets/72157633399527884/>