

HARNESSING SOIL MICROBIAL TRAITS FOR HEALTHIER SOILS

Dr. Jen Wood

With support from the [Commonwealth Department of Agriculture](#), La Trobe's Dr Jen Wood has developed accessible guidance for growers in the Murray Valley and Mallee regions on the active management of soil microbial habitats. Soil biology is an important component of soil health, but it can be difficult for growers to interpret what complex microbial measures mean for their soils. [Dr Wood's research](#) focuses on understanding how microbes experience the soil habitat and identifying the key management levers that change that environment, helping growers incorporate soil biology into their existing management practices.

In May 2026, events organised by Murray Valley Wine Growers Inc. (MVWG) and Mallee Horticulture Technical Network were attended by over 50 local producers. MVWG have also published a fact sheet sharing Wood's recommendations across their network, which represents approximately 270 independent viticulture businesses or approximately 20% of Australia's wine grape production.

