



📷 Ocvitti business partners Nigel Catt and Brian O'Malley with their revolutionary vineyard posts in Zerella's vineyard, at Sellick's Hill in the McLaren Vale wine region. Photo Naomi Jellicoe.

SA Business

Ocvitti finds a solution to millions of broken vineyard posts

Nigel Austin, The Advertiser

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ENTREPRENEURS Brian O'Malley and Nigel Catt are leading the fight to find a solution to the millions of broken vineyard posts that need to be repaired or replaced every year.

Since starting their innovative company Ocvitti in 2010, they have developed a range of clever products to repair broken posts and a new steel post to replace traditional wooden posts.

They estimate that close to 100 million posts are holding up the grape growing industry in Australia of which at least five million posts and probably many more break and need to be replaced every year.

Mr O'Malley said the problems were exacerbated from the mid-1990s when the Australian wine industry started to expand quickly and some vineyard owners put virtually anything into the ground.

“People try and guard against white ants, but even with treatment the posts are vulnerable to them as well as to fungus, wet and dry conditions, heavy fruit load and mechanical harvesters,” he said.

Ocvitti entered the industry in 2010 by developing a plastic repair kit for broken wooden posts, quickly moving to a metal repair system for wooden posts and a repair method for broken galvanised posts.

They have since developed a new metal post (made from galena, aluminium, rare metals and zinc) to replace broken wooden posts and for new vineyard plantings.

“The 9.5cm wide metal post with rounded wire holes, outperforms any galvanised product and has been quickly adopted by leading vineyards and wine companies around Australia,” Mr O'Malley said.

“They are made by Conma Industries, Edwardstown, which has received a Federal Government Automotive transition taskforce grant to install a second production line.”

Ocvitti installed close to 50,000 metal posts in its first year and expects to install 100,000 metal posts in the second calendar year.

Mr O'Malley said their benefits include much better durability, the absence of potentially harmful chemicals, safety for installers and they are a lot better for the environment.

Mr Catt, an experienced winemaker and wine industry executive, said the wooden posts break at an incredible rate.

He expects a tidal wave of creosote and CCA posts going to landfill in the next five to 10 years.

“The wine industry has been searching for an alternative to wooden posts for many years and our steel posts seem to offer the best solution,” he said. “They workout cheaper than wooden posts when longevity, breakage and repair costs are taken into account.”

Mr Catt said the steel posts last for at least 25 to 30 years compared to an average life of only nine years for wooden posts.

Ocvitti made a profit for the first time last year because of the considerable cost of developing its range of products during the past five years and the amount of money spent on research and development, patents and design registrations.

The business employs about 20 contract installers and many more indirectly through Conma Industries.

Ocloc products are designed and manufactured in Australia, and are manufactured under licence in the United States.