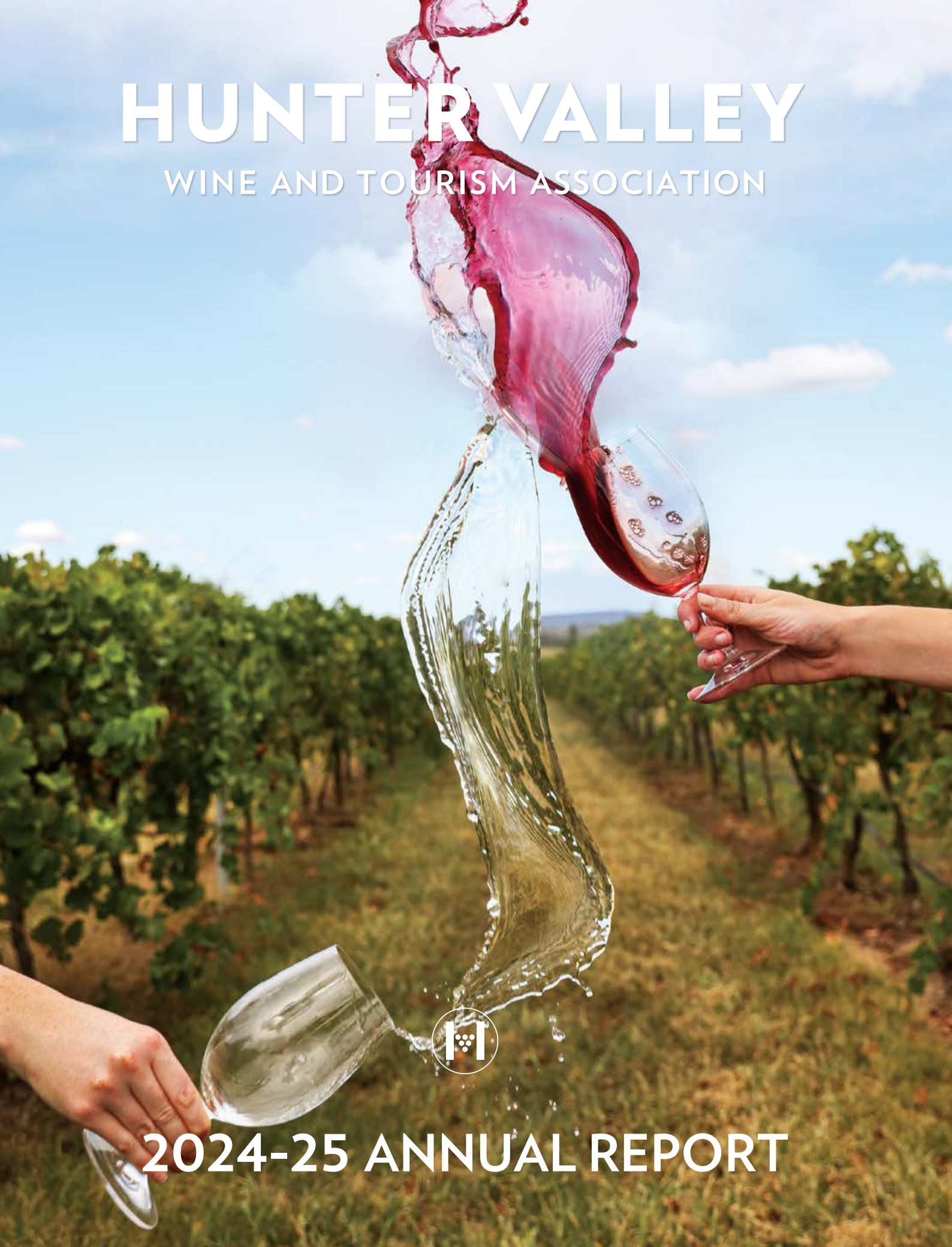


HUNTER VALLEY

WINE AND TOURISM ASSOCIATION

2024-25 ANNUAL REPORT

CONTENTS

WELCOME TO COUNTRY

We acknowledge the people of the Wonnaruah Nation as the Traditional Custodians of the land we operate on. We recognise their continuing connection to the land and waters and thank them for protecting this country and its ecosystems since time immemorial. We pay our respects to Elders past and present and extend that respect to all First Nations people.

Front cover photo credit: Chris Elfes, Elfes Images

PRESIDENT REPORT

2025 has been another strong year in the Hunter Valley wine and tourism sector, beginning with one of the best Semillon vintages in recent memory. Record tonnages and extremely high quality have meant that the Hunter Valley is seen in its best light as many of these wines are now going into market. All our wonderful grape growers and winemakers should be proud of a job well done. It appears to be a top white vintage in general with all the key white varietals all producing lovely, regionally specific wines of the highest quality. It is probably a bit early to tell with the red wines, but early indications show an above average vintage also. The 2025 vintage has been a welcome bounce back after the miniscule tonnages of 2024 and as such, our cellar doors will have ample volumes of great wines to satisfy our visitors.

Our wines continue to be recognized both domestically and internationally with our wines being listed on the top lists both here and around the world. I would like to single out Brokenwood Wines in being named Winery of the Year in the 2026 Halliday Wine Companion Awards.

This year, we have continued to work closely with both Cessnock and Singleton Councils as well as state and federal bodies to ensure that Hunter Valley is at the forefront and that we have a seat at the table when major decisions are being made for our industry.

This year has also seen great strides from all of those in the tourism sector, with our restaurants winning major awards, and accommodation venues continuing to provide best in class options for people wanting to visit this great region.

Looking forward, I would like to focus on a few key priorities. The 200-year anniversary in 2028 will be a major focus for early 2026 in terms of getting a plan in place for us all to work towards to ensure our region is at its best. Also, the heritage vineyards project will be running in tandem in the hope of having that project completed in time for the 200-year celebrations.

I would also like to thank our CEO, Jennie Curran for her year leading the team at the HVWTA. Jennie works tirelessly to ensure that the Hunter Valley remains one of the most important and relevant wine regions in Australia. Along with her team, who have all grown in their roles and been a wonderful support for Jennie, and us all.

Chris Tyrrell
President

CEO REPORT

The Hunter Valley wine and tourism sector has again shown strength and agility over the past year, navigating shifting economic conditions and a competitive visitor market. As the region's peak industry body, the Hunter Valley Wine & Tourism Association has continued to strive to unite operators behind a clear, data-led approach to marketing, advocacy and destination development.

During 2024–25 we strengthened our signature campaigns celebrating Hunter Valley Shiraz, expanded the reach of winecountry.com.au, and deepened our use of *Localis* insights to guide decision-making. We have also remained a strong voice in planning and infrastructure discussions—working with Cessnock and Singleton councils, Destination NSW, NSW Wine and other state and federal agencies to protect vineyard land, improve visitor access and streamline event approvals.

Looking ahead to 2025–26, HVWTA will keep building on these priorities: elevating our brand, driving sustainable visitation and supporting members through industry engagement and events, business development and trade engagement, visitor servicing, partnerships and targeted marketing.

My thanks go to the Board for their guidance and to the many engaged members who contribute through committees and working groups.

Finally, I acknowledge and thank our hardworking and productive team whose creativity and dedication continue to position the Hunter Valley as one of Australia's leading wine and tourism destinations.

Jennie Curran
CEO

KEY PRIORITIES

1 ADVOCACY

LAND USE PLANNING
- Cessnock City Council Vineyards District Planning Proposal
- Singleton Council Rural Vineyards Strategy
- Heritage Vineyards

FEDERAL GOVERNMENT
- Wine Tourism Cellar Door Grant
- Funding for Domestic Wine Marketing
- Austrade Export Market Development Grant

NSW GOVERNMENT
- Land Tax
- STRA Review
- Capacity and marketing funding
- Container Deposit Scheme

HUNTER VALLEY BICENTENNIAL - 2028

2 DESTINATION & WINE BRAND MARKETING

ALWAYS ON ORGANIC SOCIAL MEDIA
- Facebook, Instagram, TikTok, Linkedin

MARKETING CAMPAIGNS
- Digital, print, content collaborations

DIRECT MARKETING
- Editorial content (blogs)
- EDMs to consumer database

WEBSITE
- SEO, GEO, Bookeasy, digital itinerary development

CONSUMER EVENTS
- Uncorked Balmoral
- Good Food & Wine Show Brisbane
- Say I Do wedding trail

MEDIA ENGAGEMENT
- DNSW and Tourism Australia visiting media famils

3 INDUSTRY DEVELOPMENT

MEMBER ENGAGEMENT
- Member Forums
- Uncapped Connections -B2B networking

LOCALIS
- Tourism data insights and analytics

INDUSTRY EVENTS
- Legends Industry Awards
- Wine Show Celebrations Lunch

PRODUCT DEVELOPMENT
- Cruise, export ready workshops, NSW First Program

INDUSTRY SCHOLARSHIPS
- AWRI-viticulture, wine assessment, wine technology

4 BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT & TRADE ENGAGEMENT

INBOUND TRADE
- Trade Shows:
  - *Australian Tourism Exchange*
  - *Gday Australia Tourism Australia Marketplaces (China, SE Asia)*
- International Trade Planner
- Newcastle Airport Global Tourism Project

BUSINESS EVENTS
- Trade Shows - *AIME*
- Business Events lead generation

WINE INDUSTRY TRADE
- Vintage famil
- Wine Australia & NSW Wine trade engagement
- Export market opportunities

5 VISITOR SERVICING

HUNTER VALLEY VISITOR INFORMATION CENTRE
- Bookeasy

REGIONAL GUIDE AND MAP
- Distribution partnership with *Australian Traveller*, plus over 340 hotels, airports and visitor centres

WHAT'S ON GUIDES
- Website and social media

WEBSITE
- Bookeasy, SEO, GEO, digital itinerary development
- Australian Tourism Data Warehouse

LOCALIS DATA INSIGHTS

This year, HVWTA continued its investment into *Localis*, a destination data insights portal, with members receiving monthly reporting and a weekly accommodation occupancy monitor.

The 2024/25 financial year demonstrated steady and consistent growth for the Hunter Valley visitor economy, with key indicators showing improving performance across the region. Overnight visitation remained strong throughout the year, regularly tracking above 2023/24 FY and 2022/23 FY levels, and steadily closing the gap toward 2019 results. Monthly results in January (59,292), March (52,383), April (63,973), May (56,421) and June (54,875) illustrate stable demand and a solid base of overnight travellers across both peak and shoulder periods.

Accommodation performance strengthened year-on-year, supported by improved occupancy and resilient pricing. Length of stay held relatively stable, with a continued pattern of short-break travel and strong weekend demand. Looking ahead, forward booking data for Spring and Summer 2025 shows strong demand, positioning the region for solid performance into 2026.

The region's core audience continued to be NSW-based visitors, complemented by interstate from Queensland, reinforcing the Hunter Valley's strength as a leading drive and short-break destination. Flight-search trends also confirmed continued interest from Brisbane and Melbourne, supporting ongoing interstate opportunities.

Spend in region for the 24/25 FY was comparable to the 23/24 FY and slightly down on 22/23 FY. Of the total in-region spend, 45% was spent in cellar doors, 31% in restaurants and bars, and 14% in hotels/resorts. Visitor spend made up for 84.3% of total spend in-region. (Noting this is in-region spend only and does not account for online bookings)

6% of total in-region spend is from international markets. The top 5 International source markets were USA, UK, China Mainland, New Zealand & Singapore.

Localis Key Performance Indicators - Hunter Valley Wine Country

38.72% MONTHLY OCCUPANCY
54.23% WEEKEND OCCUPANCY

58, 340
AVERAGE OVERNIGHT MONTHLY VISITORS

$596.55
AVERAGE DAILY RATE

2.6 DAYS
AVERAGE LENGTH OF STAY

3.5m
AVERAGE MONTHLY VISITOR SPEND

30, 440
AVERAGE MONTHLY FLIGHT SEARCHES (to Newcastle)

REGIONAL ACHIEVEMENTS

INDUSTRY DEVELOPMENT & ENGAGEMENT

- 41 participants across WSET Award 1, 2 and 3
- 3 Wine Industry scholarships awarded
- Over 1000 attendees at industry awards, events, networkers & workshops
- 44 attendees at Rootling's network events
- 51 attendees for the Destination NSW First program

TRADE ENGAGEMENT & MEDIA

- 140 trade guests attended in-region trade *(wine and tourism)* events
- 12 Business Events and Inbound Tourism trade fairs attended
- $3.6m Business Events leads shared to operators

SUCCESS

- 2 Gold at Australian Tourism Awards 2024 *(both awarded to Balloon Aloft)*
- 3 Gold at NSW Tourism Awards 2024 *(2 awarded to Balloon Aloft)*
- Broke Fordwich awarded Silver in the NSW Tiny Town award 2025
- 1 NSW Accommodation Awards for Excellence
- 3 NSW Restaurant & Catering Association Awards for Excellence 2025
- 3 Sydney Morning Herald Chef Hats 2026
- 80 Gold Medals awarded at the Hunter Valley Wine Show 2025
- 46 Gold Medals awarded at the Hunter Boutique Winemakers Show 2025
- Halliday Winery of the Year 2026, Brokenwood Wines
- 6 Halliday Top 100 Wineries
- 27 Halliday 5 Star wineries

*as at November 2025

SUSTAINABILITY FRAMEWORK

FOCUS AREA	NATIONAL PROJECTS	REGIONAL PROJECTS	LOCAL CHAMPIONS
ENVIRONMENTAL SUSTAINABILITY	> Sustainable Winegrowing Australia (SWA)	> SWA Training workshops > Benchmarking > Wine Australia's regional program - Innovation: Mechanical shaking for disease control & yield management > Regional Sustainability Plan *(ongoing)*	> 15 members and 25 fully certified members (as at November 2025)
BIODIVERSITY	> National EcoVineyards Program	> Ecovineyards funding concluded in June 2025 > Undervine management- Ecovineyards Ground covers & hydroseeding workshop > Integrated Pest Management: National Ecovineyards Program Bat Report > Hunter Valley Wine Country Landcare Group (HVWCL) - collaboration with Cessnock Correctional Facility to grow native seedlings & 2026 Weed Management Workshop planned	> Innovation - Undervine cover crop trials and further trials using pollinator and native grasses in mid-row cover crops > Further Native Biodiversity corridors planted
BIOSECURITY	> Wine Australia & DPI Phylloxera zones & mapping > Xylella awareness > Weeds of National Significance	> Biosecurity Response Training > Pest & Disease Management workshops > Pruning workshops	> Biosecurity signage > Native Biosecurity hedges planted
CLIMATE CHANGE	> Wine Australia Carbon Emissions Reduction Roadmap: 42% reduction by 2030 & Net Zero by 2050 > Investigating alternative varieties	> Winery Energy Reduction strategies-Scope 1 & 2 > Managing extreme weather events > Weather station data available > Wine Australia-Weather Station Smoke detection roll out	> Carbon Neutral certification *(Keith Tulloch)* with Climate Active > 72 EV Charging units > Winery Carbon Capture & Storage project > Smoke Taint > Alternative varieties planted
WASTE MANAGEMENT	> NSW EPA - Bin Trim Program > APCO	> Go Circular-Winding Down Winery waste *(grant funded project to reduce organic waste & includes local Restaurants)* > CDS For NSW due to come into effect in mid to late 2027 > Find better recycling outcomes for glass, paper & cardboard, phase out EPS & soft plastics	> Organic waste composting & kitchen gardens project > EPA Bin Trim Rebates
CONTINUING EXCELLENCE IN GRAPE GROWING AND WINEMAKING	> Wine show judging > Benchmarking > Wine Australia Future Leaders > National Rootlings network > Halliday Winery of the Year - Brokenwood Wines > Liz Riley - Fellow of the ASVO Inductee 2025	> Upskilling > Young Winemakers Tasting Group > HVWTA Board-Youth Advisory position > Agskilled Training > Next Crop Regional Leadership appplication	> Wine show judging - trainees > Future Leaders alumni > Young Gun of Wine Vineyard & Vigneron regional finalists
SUSTAINABLE TOURISM EXPERIENCES	> Ecotourism certification- Balloon Aloft are the first tourism operator in Australia to achieve certification	> Ecotourism - Strive 4 Sustainability Scorecard	> Indigenous engagement- tourism Welcome to Country experiences > Sustainable conference experiences > 17 registered Hunter Valley operators *(Sustainability Scorecard)*

BOARD MEMBERS 2024-25

Chris Tyrrell
President
Tyrrell's

Sasha Degen
Vice President
Degen Estate & Hunter Valley Stays

James Agnew
Secretary
Agnew Wines
(resigned Nov 2025)

Melissa Hughes
Treasurer
Strategic Appointment

Karin Adcock
HVWTA Board Member
Winmark Wines

Phil Hele OAM
HVWTA Board Member
Hunter Valley Resort

Stuart Hordern
HVWTA Board Member
Brokenwood Wines

Stephen Leathley
HVWTA Board Member
Insite Planning

Andrew Margan
HVWTA Board Member
(NSW Wine Board Member)
Margan Wines & Restaurant

Ian Napier
HVWTA Board Member
Wombat Crossing

Alisdair Tulloch
HVWTA Youth Advisor
Aeon Wines

Michelle Wills
HVWTA Board Member
Balloon Aloft

Shaun O'Bryan
Secretary
Salter Brothers Hospitality
(resigned August 2025)

Geoff Krieger
HVWTA Alliance Representative
Brokenwood Wines

STAFF MEMBERS 2024-25

Jennie Curran
CEO

Karlene Wyborn
Office Manager

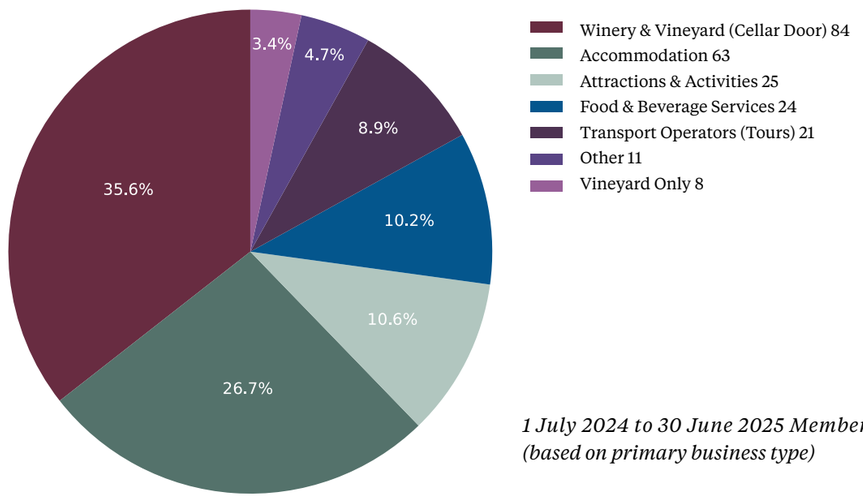
Manda Duffy
Business Development and Inbound Tourism

Elizabeth Preston
Marketing Specialist

Bella Murray
Marketing and Engagement Assistant

MEMBERSHIP

HVWTA was funded by 236 members in the 2024/2025 Financial Year across a diverse range of tourism and wine related industries.



1 July 2024 to 30 June 2025 Membership Data (based on primary business type)

CONSUMER MARKETING

AUTUMN/EASTER ACTIVITY

IN MARKET 1ST MARCH - 30TH MAY 2025

CAMPAIGN SUMMARY

The *Autumn/Easter Campaign* was designed to drive visitation for the 2025 Easter break and school holiday period. The campaign was promoted through paid social media, and supported through Google Ads, organic social media, blog content and consumer EDMs.

RESULTS

PAID SOCIAL MEDIA
607k IMPRESSIONS
3.94% CLICK THROUGH RATE

WINTER CAMPAIGN

IN MARKET JUNE - AUGUST 2025

OBJECTIVES

- Showcase the Hunter Valley as the preferred wine and food destination this winter
- To drive website traffic visitation and Bookeasy purchases
- To promote events taking place across winter
- To convert existing demand
- Increase visitor spend and overnight visitation

CAMPAIGN SUMMARY

Building upon the success of previous *Winter* campaigns, this campaign continued a strategy of strong imagery, engaging video and clear call to actions.

The campaign messaging emphasized the Hunter Valley as a premier Winter destination for food and wine lovers.

This campaign focused on a multi-channel approach including paid social media advertising, organic social media, *Google Ads,* partnership with *Qantas Travel Insider* and *Youtube/Demand Generation*.

With the continued power of video, the campaign leveraged engaging, scroll-stopping video on social media along with strategic paid advertising to drive real consideration and intent for visitation.

RESULTS

WEBSITE
346k WEBSITE PAGE VIEWS
150k SESSIONS
27.6k LEADS TO OPERATORS

PAID SOCIAL MEDIA
610 IMPRESSIONS
6.1% CLICK THROUGH RATE

ORGANIC SOCIAL MEDIA
1.3m IMPRESSIONS
13k SHARES

GOOGLE ADS CAMPAIGN

IN MARKET *Always on*

OBJECTIVES

- To capture demand generated through other marketing channels to the website
- Increase leads to operators by increased visitation to key sections of the website

RESULTS

14k CLICKS
176k IMPRESSIONS
12.09% CLICK THROUGH RATE
3.9k LEADS

ALWAYS ON CAMPAIGN

Our *Always On Campaign* ensures that the Hunter Valley continuously stays top of mind for the Hunter Valley's key target markets throughout the year. This is a multi-channel approach consisting of a monthly EDM to the consumer database, management, improvement and SEO of the winecountry.com.au website, social media (Facebook, Instagram and TikTok) and media and content partnerships.

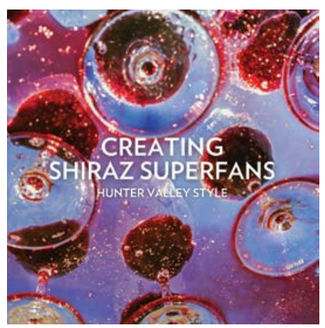
REGIONAL GUIDE

The *Hunter Valley Regional Guide* is distributed to 340 locations including Sydney and Newcastle hotels, accredited Visitor Information Centres across New South Wales, Hunter Valley venues and 25,000 copies through our distribution partnership with Australian Traveller.

SHIRAZ CAMPAIGN

The *Shiraz Campaign* was designed to educate consumers about Hunter Valley Shiraz's lighter, elegant style and to differentiate it from bigger, bolder Shiraz styles tapping into current consumer trends for lighter styles of reds.

This campaign was in market from June 2025 to August 2025 and targeted both experienced wine drinkers and consumers interested in wine. The campaign was promoted through paid social media, organic social media, EDM and blogs. The campaign generated over 518,000 impressions across paid and organic social media, 2,700 page views and 3890 views on Shiraz-specific blogs. Organic social media posts reached an average of 40% non-followers which shows the content was engaging with new audiences.



DIGITAL CHANNELS - WEBSITE WINECOUNTRY.COM.AU

Our destination digital channels continue to be an integral part of our destination marketing plan.

The website continued to be a key tool, facilitating and inspiring consumers looking to plan and book a visit to the Hunter Valley. In the 2024-25 financial year winecountry.com.au had over one million page views and produced over 92,000 direct leads for our members.

Three of the top five most viewed pages on the website were events related which shows events continue to be a key driver for visitation to the Hunter Valley.

The top four drivers of website traffic were Organic search, direct search, paid search and organic social media respectively.

Website Overview

WEBSITE VIEWS	TOTAL USERS	TOTAL SESSIONS	FEMALE	MALE
1.25m ^25%	403.9k ^19%	562.7k ^32%	61.6%	38.4%

Leads To Operators

TOTAL LEADS	WEBSITE LEADS	EMAIL LEADS	CALL LEADS	BOOK NOW LEADS
92k ^51%	87k ^55%	1.8k ^20%	1.5k ^7%	1.4k ˅7% *includes purchase leads*

Traffic Source (Sessions)

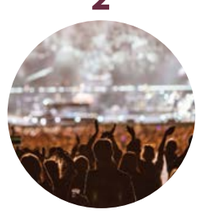
ORGANIC	DIRECT	GOOGLE ADS	FACEBOOK	BING	INSTAGRAM STORIES	INSTAGRAM FEED
335.8k	69.3k	53.4k	8.1k	8k	6.8k	3.2k

Top 5 Visited Pages

1

HOME PAGE

2



EVENTS HOME PAGE

3

EVENTS & CONCERTS

4

UPCOMING EVENTS

5

EXPERIENCES

SOCIAL MEDIA

The 2024-25 financial year also saw strong performance for @huntervalley and @huntervalley.wine social media.

As data continued to show the trend of social media as an increasingly important search tool for travellers, we ensured our social media was reaching more people and inspiring consideration for travel to the Hunter Valley.

We significantly increased our short-form video (reel) content across the platforms and developed high-quality, engaging iPhone content which saw our reach grow exponentially.

We have continued to build our presence on LinkedIn, using this platform to engage with our trade, media and corporate audiences. Performance on social media has real impacts, not only visitation to venues, but also website traffic. Social search has become the 4th largest driver of website traffic in the 2024-25 financial year.

HIGHEST PERFORMING INSTAGRAM POST

@qftravelinsider collab. 206 shares and saves, 146k views

HIGHEST PERFORMING INSTAGRAM POST
not collaborated

2.2k shares and saves, 49k views

HIGHEST PERFORMING FACEBOOK POST

86 shares and saves 285k views

HIGHEST PERFORMING TIKTOK POST

715 shares and saves 16.4k views

MEDIA & CONTENT PARTNERSHIPS

Australian Traveller

Australian Traveller display advertisement, EDM inclusion and display banners in May-June 2025 edition.

Qantas Travel Insider X Hunter Valley

HVWTA partnered with *Qantas Travel Insider* and 16 Hunter Valley operators for a buy-in opportunity, for a two-part 'short breaks' social content series which received a combined total of 272k views and 893 shares.

Australian Society of Travel Writers

The *Australian Society of Travel Writers Conference* was one of the year's most impactful initiatives. Held at Cypress Lakes and Elysia Spa Resort, it welcomed 150 delegates over two days. Pre and post famils, designed and managed by our team, involved 65 writers and 57 properties. The result: 26 published articles across digital and print platforms, generating exceptional national exposure for the region.

CONSUMER EVENTS

GOOD FOOD AND WINE SHOW BRISBANE

In 2024, the Hunter Valley hosted its first pavilion at the *Good Food and Wine Show Brisbane*. Four Hunter Valley wine producers exhibited along with HVWTA.

The pavilion was so successful that in 2025 the Hunter Valley pavilion has grown to feature 11 Hunter Valley wine producers.

SAY I DO 2025

Say I Do was created to promote the Hunter Valley as a premier destination for weddings and milestone celebrations. It was designed as a one-day event where Hunter Valley wedding venues and accommodation properties open up their venues for people to view.

The first *Say I Do* event was held on the 20th January 2025 and will become an annual event, with the next *Say I Do* taking place Sunday 19th January 2026.

HUNTER VALLEY UNCORKED BALMORAL 2024

Hunter Valley Uncorked Balmoral 2024 was held on Sunday 20th October 2024.

This is our main consumer event in Sydney providing an important opportunity to put the regional brands of those who support the event in front of a key target demographic, and highest visiting source market to the Hunter Valley.

Thanks to the support of the following members for joining us: 1813, Allandale Winery, Bimbadgen & Night Merchant, Bimbadgen - Bubbles Bar, Bonvilla Estate, Briar Ridge Vineyard, Brokenwood Wines, First Creek Wines, Gartelmann Wines, Hungerford Hill Wines, Keith Tulloch Wine + FAR Distilling, Margan Wines, Pokolbin Estate, Scarborough Wine Co., Thomas Wines, Tulloch Wines, Tyrrell's, Winmark Wines, The Deck Café Lovedale, Twine Restaurant, Hunter Valley Cheese Factory.

TOTAL IMPRESSIONS 734k

TOTAL LANDING PAGE VIEWS 21.5k

REGIONAL EVENT PROMOTION

SOCIAL MEDIA POSTS SUPPORTING EVENTS IN REGION
50

ENGAGEMENT FROM EVENT-RELATED SOCIAL MEDIA POSTS
7.8k

TOTAL EVENT PAGE VIEWS
194k
14% of total views from website

EVENT-FOCUSED BLOG REVIEWS
57k*
**assisted with paid spend*

INDUSTRY EVENTS

HUNTER VALLEY LEGENDS AWARDS

The 18th annual *Hunter Valley Legends Awards* brought more than 330 industry professionals and guests together at Rydges Resort Hunter Valley to honour the people and stories that continue to shape Australia's oldest wine region. The *Hunter Valley Legends Awards* is also a celebration of the collaboration that defines our region and the generations of talent who continue to build on its legacy.

In 2025, Andrew and Lisa Margan were welcomed into the esteemed alumni as the Wine Living Legend and Tourism Living Legend, bringing the total number of Hunter Valley Legends to 37. Andrew was honoured for his long-standing commitment to elevating the Hunter Valley on the world stage, while Lisa was recognised for more than 30 years of dedication to the region's food, wine, and tourism landscape, enriching the local community and supporting countless initiatives.

Special thanks go to the Hunter Valley Legends Awards committee, chaired by Brad Russ for their ongoing commitment and support.

HUNTER VALLEY TOURISM OPERATOR OF THE YEAR
Our Italian Table

HUNTER VALLEY ACCOMMODATION OPERATOR OF THE YEAR
Rydges Resort Hunter Valley

HUNTER VALLEY CELLAR DOOR OF THE YEAR
Brokenwood Wines

HUNTER VALLEY WINEMAKER OF THE YEAR
Liz Silkman (Silkman Wines & First Creek Wines)

HUNTER VALLEY VITICULTURIST OF THE YEAR
Louise Eather (Tyrrell's)

HUNTER VALLEY YOUNG ACHIEVER OF THE YEAR
Alisdair Tulloch (Aeon Wines & Keith Tulloch Wine)

HUNTER VALLEY TOURISM INDUSTRY LIVING LEGEND
Lisa Margan

HUNTER VALLEY WINE INDUSTRY LIVING LEGENDS
Andrew Margan

We thank our trophy sponsors: Riedel, Jurds,Wine Selectors and First Creek Hunter Valley.

HUNTER INDUSTRY EVENT

In July, we held the inaugural cross-regional *Hunter Industry Event* at Brokenwood cellar door. *B*ringing regional tourism organisations and operators from across the region to connect, collaborate and celebrate our shared commitment to growing the visitor economy.

On the night we heard from two of the nation's most respected tourism leaders, Phillipa Harrison, Managing Director, Tourism Australia, and Stephen Mahoney, General Manager, Policy Product and Engagement, Destination NSW.

We would like to thank all those that came on the evening, and a special thanks to our event partners, Brokenwood Wines, Fordtronics AV & Mercure Hunter Valley Gardens, and to industry partners DSSN, University of Newcastle, Newcastle Airport, TAFE and the Committee for the Hunter.

PKF HUNTER VALLEY WINE SHOW CELEBRATIONS LUNCHEON

The *53rd Hunter Valley Wine Show* week concluded with the *PKF Hunter Valley Wine Show Celebrations Luncheon* at Oaks Cypress Lakes Resort, where more than 360 industry professionals gathered to acknowledge excellence and celebrate the region's achievements. Hosted by Johanna Griggs AM, the luncheon combined warmth, professionalism, and industry pride.

This year's Show attracted 68 exhibitors and 679 entries, judged under the leadership of Chair of Judges, Toni Paterson MW, alongside a panel of experts from across Australia. Across the week, the team assessed close to 4,000 bottles of Hunter Valley wine and awarded 80 Gold medals. The panel also welcomed Dr Edward Ragg MW (Beijing) as the 2025 International Judge, offering valuable global perspective. Toni Paterson MW commented:

"Across all classes, there is great diversity in the Hunter Valley... Wines that have integrity, personality, harmony, and length are the hallmarks of good wines and there are many wines in this region that have these hallmarks."

We also recognised the next generation of Hunter talent by proudly awarding three industry scholarships: the Alasdair Sutherland Scholarship sponsored by HVWTA, awarded to Brett Woodward (Saddlers Creek Wines), the Tyrrell Family Advanced Viticulture Scholarship sponsored by the Tyrrell Family, awarded to Nicholas Looby (Margan Wines) and the Advanced Wine Technical Scholarship, sponsored by Brokenwood Wines, awarded to Giacomo Soldani (Margan Wines). Special thanks go to the Hunter Valley Wine Show Luncheon Event committee, chaired by Lisa Margan. We would also like to express our gratitude to Andrew Thomas for his contributions as HVWTA's representative on the Hunter Valley Wine Show Committee

UNCAPPED CONNECTIONS

Following its successful launch in 2024, *Uncapped Connections* returned in 2025, bringing the industry together at Cessnock Leagues Club. Designed as the Hunter Valley's own Business-to-Business showcase, the event creates a dedicated space for collaboration, relationship-building and business growth across the wine and tourism sectors.

This year, 20 Buyers met with 33 Sellers in a series of targeted one-on-one appointments, creating valuable opportunities to present new products, share ideas and unlock future partnerships. The format continues to prove its strength, allowing businesses to establish new contacts, strengthen existing relationships and explore fresh opportunities, all in a single, productive setting.

"This was a great opportunity to catch up with partners and make connections with other tourism businesses with the hope of working together in the future." Michelle Wills, Balloon Aloft

Uncapped Connections is fast becoming a key date on our industry calendar, helping local operators expand their networks, broaden their reach, and work together to amplify the Hunter Valley story.

SUB-COMMITTEE REPORTS

ADVOCACY STREAM

This year has again seen a collective effort and coordinated regional voice representing the needs of wine and tourism businesses across the region. HVWTA has worked to strengthen and broaden our networks across all parts of industry, locally, nationally and with federal agencies. We maintain open dialogue with State Members, Clayton Barr and Dave Layzell as well as with our Federal Member, Dan Repacholi. HVWTA staff and Board members represent the industry with engagement on committee's and through in-person attendance at industry events with a range of stakeholders including Destination NSW, Tourism Australia, ATEC, Australian Regional Tourism, NSW Wine, Australian Grape & Wine, Wine Australia and the Committee for the Hunter.

Land Use Advocacy

During the past year, HVWTA has strengthened its role in shaping the future of land use and development across the Hunter Valley. Last year, the Association developed an Advocacy Statement on Land Use Planning, which sets out our priorities for preserving the region's viticultural heritage while supporting sustainable, well-managed growth. This formed the basis of our engagement and submission to Cessnock Council's Vineyards District Place Strategy.

Our approach continues to focus on influencing local and state government planning policies to ensure that viticulture remains the primary land use within the Hunter Valley. HVWTA continues to advocate strongly against the fragmentation of vineyard areas and urban encroachment that threatens the region's agricultural integrity.

Throughout the year, the HVWTA Board has actively engaged members on this issue through a town hall meeting and ongoing consultations. We have also worked closely with local Councils to ensure development standards uphold the region's unique heritage and advance sustainable tourism outcomes.
This advocacy work remains central to maintaining the distinctive appeal, authenticity, and economic vitality of the Hunter Valley as one of Australia's premier wine and tourism destinations.

We would like to particularly acknowledge Stephen Leathley for his ongoing significant contributions in shaping land use planning in the vineyards district.

Wine Industry Advocacy

HVWTA continue to work closely with NSW Wine and Australian Grape & Wine in its collective advocacy work. We thank Australian Grape & Wine for their ongoing work around trade & market access, research & development, biosecurity, WEST and cellar door grant and diversity, equity and inclusion and particularly in coordination a national response to the introduction of wine bottles into state container deposit schemes. This work is a strong focus for NSW Wine as well as their efforts to support marketing in the domestic market, land tax primary producer exemptions and the extension of funding for viticulture programs. Our thanks to Matthew Jessop and Geoff Krieger for leading this work on behalf of the state.

Tourism Industry Advocacy

HVWTA are a member of the Australian Tourism Export Council (ATEC) and support their ongoing advocacy to create effective policy to support the growth of inbound tourism into Australia. This year Manda Duffy has attended ATEC Marketplace and contributed to dialogue around strengthening Australia's inbound tourism sector. We have continued to support ATEC's work around the strategic refocus of the Export Market Development Grant with Austrade, which has given HVWTA the opportunity to engage in more inbound tourism trade engagement. In addition, industry-wide support has helped drive progress across several of ATEC's key advocacy pillars: improving international air access, addressing labour and skills shortages, rebuilding global distribution channels, enhancing market competitiveness through digital capability programs, and advocating for streamlined visa systems. These efforts are collectively helping to rebuild Australia's international visitor economy and position regional destinations like the Hunter Valley for sustainable growth.

On behalf of our members, HVWTA have written the following submissions and/or letters of support over the last year:

- Cessnock Council – Vineyards District Place Strategy
- Cessnock Council – Proposed changes to Temporary Events DCP
- EnergyCo – Hunter Transmission Project Environmental Impact Statement
- NSW Government – Battery Energy Storage System, Rothbury
- NSW Government/Transport for NSW – Strategic Regional Integrated Transport Plan
- Destination Sydney Surrounds North – Hunter Global Tourism
- Austrade – Feedback on Export Market Development Grant
- Wine Australia - One Grape & Wine Sector Plan implementation
- Landcare – Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry Climate Smart Agriculture Program

Ian Napier, Advocacy Chair & Jennie Curran, CEO

WINE INDUSTRY & WINE MARKETING FORUMS

Young Winemakers Group

Co-chaired by Alisdair Tulloch, Kate Sturgess and Emily Glover, the Young Winemakers Group has had a standout year, hosting four dynamic tasting events – from Hunter vs Barossa benchmarking to a Grenache Masterclass and an Argentinian deep dive and a session with Australian Winemaker of the Year Liz Silkman. Additionally, the group played a pivotal role in the Vintage trade famil, proudly showcasing their wines to industry professionals.

Heritage Vineyards

Led by Andrew Margan, the HVWTA continues its pursuit of both State and National Heritage recognition for the viticultural regions of Pokolbin and Broke Fordwich. We are fortunate to have Dr Elisa Palazzo from UNSW, an internationally renowned expert in cultural landscapes, who has recently completed a Cultural Landscape Comparative Analysis which evaluates the heritage significance of Australia's viticultural landscapes aiming to identify candidates for National Heritage Listing and potential future World Heritage nomination.

EcoVineyards

Funding has now concluded for the national EcoVineyards program in the Hunter Valley supported by Wine Australia. Delivered by Retallack Viticulture and supported and funded locally by the HVWTA.

The program was designed to help wine growers improve sustainability by enhancing biodiversity and soil health through practices like planting cover crops and insectary plants. The program has developed demonstration sites at Brokenwood, Margan, Scarborough and Tyrrell's and has delivered workshops and resources to help growers implement a local adoption program to increase the land area dedicated to enhancing functional biodiversity and to increase the use of vineyard cover crops and soil remediation practices.

Thanks to Brent Hutton who has acted as the Regional On-Ground Coordinator for the program.

Wine Marketing & Trade Engagement

The Wine Marketing Committee's focus continued to look at ways to attract domestic trade and wine media to the region. This included the popular Vintage Famil in February 2025 – Backstage in the Hunter Valley, which attracted top-tier on-premise trade to experience the best of a Hunter Valley vintage. The Committee also supported the development of itineraries for a Wine Australia hosted famil for visiting trade from the Japan and UK/US markets.

The WMC's remit was to also support and endorse wine marketing programs including the HVWTA's 12-month Brand Marketing Plan and signature industry and consumer events: *Hunter Valley Legends Awards, Hunter Valley Wine Show Celebrations Luncheon and Hunter Valley Uncorked Balmoral* and the successful execution of our inaugural regional pavilion at the *Good Food & Wine Show* in Brisbane.

The Committee aligns with the over-arching state and national strategies adopted by NSW Wine and Wine Australia through the appointment of Jennie Curran to the Wine Australia Joint Marketing Group.

Thank you to the members of the Wine Industry Forum, Andrew Duff, Stuart Hordern, Liz Jackson, Andrew Ling, Andrew Margan, Aaron Mercer, Liz Riley, Jerome Scarborough, Lorrae St Vincent, Adrian Sparkes, Andrew Thomas and Alisdair Tulloch.

Thank you to the members of the Wine Marketing Committee, Kim Bickley, Chrissy Charteris, Rowena Henderson, Aimee McLennan, Brad Russ, Sally Scarborough, Jane Tyrrell, Jenna Vaughan & Carlee Watson.

Jennie Curran, CEO &
Bryan Currie, Wine Industry Forum Chair

BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT

Business Events

Business Events are thriving in the Hunter Valley, reaffirming our position as a premier destination for corporate gatherings. Interstate interest remains strong, and international events are re-engaging, with famils showcasing our diverse regional offering.

AIME (Asia Pacific Incentives, Meetings Events) - Australia's largest Business Events tradeshow - was a standout success in 2025. The Hunter Valley had the largest regional presence, with four operators joining Manda Duffy and a total of seven regional operators attending. Together, we held over 224 face-to-face meetings with planners, cementing our status as a top-tier destination.

We proudly partnered with the *MEA Conference*, followed by a high-impact famil that highlighted the Hunter Valley's business events appeal. We also joined the *DNSW Destination Showcase* with nine other Hunter Valley businesses, amplifying our visibility with key industry contacts.

Our quarterly *Business Events Forum* drives regional collaboration, sparks innovation, and champions professional development. It strengthens ties with Destination NSW and Cessnock City Council around opportunities and funding. The Hunter Valley *Say I Do* campaign was a direct outcome of this proactive group.

We are driving growth in Incentive Experience development, which aligns perfectly with our regional strengths. Wineries offer a distinctive advantage to incentive programs, attracting global enterprises seeking memorable experiences.

We continue to advocate for increased training and development support, empowering operators to meet rising demand and build capability across the sector.

The opening of Newcastle International Airport and expanded domestic flight connectivity represent significant advancements, enhancing our appeal to national and international markets.

The Hunter Valley is strategically positioned for sustained growth, backed by quality offerings, strategic partnerships, and a united regional commitment to excellence.

Inbound Tourism

Wine tourism is emerging as one of the most dynamic segments in the international visitor market. Increasingly, global travellers are seeking immersive, experience-rich stays that go beyond traditional sightseeing. The Hunter Valley's cellar door experiences, food and wine pairings, and regional events are driving longer visits, with international guests showing a strong preference for fewer multi-state trips and deeper regional engagement. This aligns with global trends, where wine tourism is forecast to grow at over 12% annually, fuelled by demand for authentic, culturally rich travel. The region's proximity to Sydney, expanding flight access via Newcastle Airport, and strategic investment in wine tourism infrastructure position the Hunter Valley to capture this rising demand and extend the average length of stay among high-value international visitors. Our tourism reporting is increasingly data-driven, using *Localis* and mobility data alongside traditional surveys to provide a robust, real-time understanding of visitation, length of stay, and visitor behaviour. This enables more targeted strategies to grow international visitation and increase the value and duration of every visit.

The top international visitor source markets for the Hunter Valley (by value) include the UK, USA, New Zealand, China, Singapore, India, and Southeast Asia.

The UK and USA remain the most significant international markets for the Hunter Valley, both in terms of visitor numbers and spend. While overall visitation from the USA is expected to dip slightly over the next two years, the luxury segment remains resilient - Australia continues to offer exceptional value to high-end travellers.

China, though slower to rebound post-pandemic, remains a valuable market due to high average spend per visitor. With over four billion residents, it continues to show strong engagement with wine and nature travel.

India and Southeast Asia are recognised as emerging markets with strong growth potential, in alignment with broader Tourism Australia and DNSW strategies. Proximity to Sydney and the opening of Newcastle International Airport further support growth in these segments, particularly in sports and play tourism.

International visitors represent high-value guests, staying longer and spending more than domestic visitors. We have a strategic opportunity to promote wine and adventure to this market, which increasingly favours longer stays and fewer multi-state visits. They demonstrate a high repeat visitation rate due to global proximity and the safe nature of our destination.

Wine tourism remains a key motivator for these markets, with cellar door experiences, food and wine, and regional events serving as major drawcards.

HVWTA successfully secured matched funding through the Export Market Development Grant (EMDG) for 2025 and 2026. This enables us to elevate our presence in international markets with agents, buyers, and wholesale trade. We worked closely with DSSN, DNSW, Tourism Australia, Australian Tourism Export Council and Newcastle Airport with the objective of elevating awareness of our wine trade, tourism assets, and connectivity. We must maintain a strong and consistent presence in market.

The international trade events attended by HVWTA included:

- *G'Day 24 Australia* (Tourism Australia) Perth – International Travel Agents – 227 appointments
- *DNSW Vivid Famil* – NZ Focus in-region
- A*TE25 Melbourne* – 112 appointments and 2634 new contacts
- *SEA Luxury Famil* – in-region
- *DNSW Focus on North Asia* – 65 inbound tour operators and 12 hosted for an in-region famil to the Hunter Valley
- *Virtuoso* – Luxury OTA Famil (Sydney)

Now is the time to invest, innovate, and collaborate. Together, we can unlock new markets, extend visitor stays and amplify the Hunter Valley's reputation as a world-class destination. Let's build on our strengths - boldly, strategically and together.

Manda Duffy
Business Development & Inbound Tourism

TOURISM INDUSTRY FORUM

The HVWTA Tourism Industry Forum continues to serve as a vital collaborative platform for representatives from accommodation, cellar doors, attractions, and key stakeholders including Cessnock and Singleton Councils, the HVWTA, and the Economic Development and Visitor Centre teams. Meeting every two months, the forum fosters robust discussions around existing trade, emerging opportunities to drive regional footfall, and the strategic alignment of local and state tourism initiatives.

Forum sessions regularly feature updates on council strategic positions, the Hunter Valley Destination Management Plan, and the NSW Strategic Overview, ensuring members are informed and aligned with broader state tourism frameworks. The objective remains clear: to share ideas, to innovate and measure results, enabling a more agile and responsive tourism ecosystem.

The forum continues to benefit from HVWTA's successful Export Market Development Grant (EMDG), which supports collective planning and representation in inbound tourism markets. Many members are export-ready and actively engaged in trade efforts, contributing to a unified regional strategy.

The *Localis* destination data insights tool remains a cornerstone of the forum's data-driven approach, helping operators better understand visitor trends and performance metrics. Its framework continues to raise awareness and inform strategic decisions across the region.

We welcome new members Jen Nicita, Kurt Nilon, Leanne Douglass and Jessica Whittemore-Tulloch, to the existing team of Brendan Burgess, Sasha Degen, Manda Duffy, Kim Jacobs, Robert McGufficke, Alena Pople, Brian & Kate Rooney, Dylan Thompson and Michelle Wills.

Thank you to all members for their ongoing commitment to advancing tourism in the Hunter Valley.

Jennie Curran, CEO & Phil Hele OAM

CESSNOCK CITY COUNCIL

The past year has seen significant progress in delivering outcomes that strengthen the Hunter Valley's visitor economy. As Mayor of Cessnock City Council, I am proud to support such a dynamic industry that is critical to the economic growth of our region. Council continues to invest in high-quality infrastructure, destination development, and industry support to ensure the Hunter Valley remains one of Australia's leading wine tourism destinations.

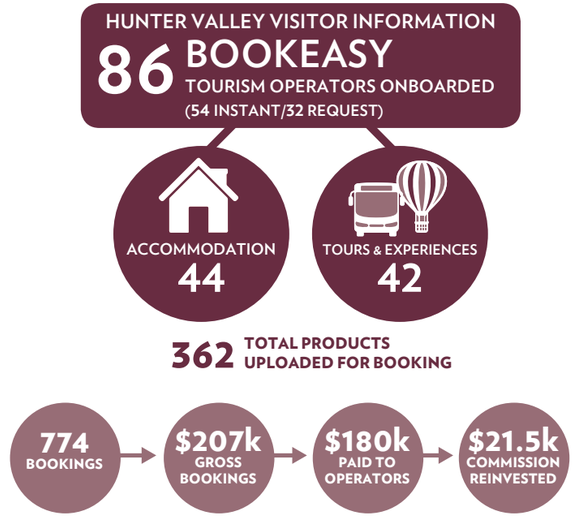
In 2024/25, Council progressed several important infrastructure projects, including upgrades to key tourism routes and shared pathway improvements. Our major capital works program delivered significant investment across roads, drainage, and bridges ($39.7 million), as well as community facilities and open spaces ($11.9 million). The Cessnock Regional Skatepark, which opened in November 2024, is an exciting new addition for residents and visitors alike.

Key projects underway or planned include the Wollombi Road Upgrade, along with externally funded developments such as the Cessnock Hospital Redevelopment and Cessnock Leagues Club Redevelopment, with construction starting in early 2025.

Strategically, Council placed the Draft Vineyards District Place Strategy on public exhibition in March 2025. This strategy will guide future development in the Cessnock Vineyards District, reinforcing the protection of high-value viticultural land and maintaining viticulture as the principal land use. Extensive stakeholder engagement has informed the planning framework, which also recognises complementary land uses to support farm viability. By promoting this integrated approach, Council aims to support a resilient, diverse, and sustainable rural economy while safeguarding the long-term potential of the Cessnock Vineyards District as one of Australia's premier wine regions.

Through the Visitor Economy Grants and Sponsorships Program, Council distributed $50,000 to support local events and innovative tourism projects, with an additional $47,500 directed toward delivering priority actions within the Hunter Valley Destination Management Plan (DMP).

The Hunter Valley Visitor Information Centre (VIC) continues to provide high-quality visitor servicing, destination promotion and grow Bookeasy bookings.



Council's partnership with the Hunter Valley Wine and Tourism Association (HVWTA) remains central to achieving shared tourism outcomes. The co-location of HVWTA at the Visitor Information Centre continues to provide opportunities for daily collaboration, knowledge sharing, and alignment across projects and campaigns. Together, Council and HVWTA have progressed several DMP initiatives, strengthened regional marketing coordination, and supported business events attraction to the Hunter Valley.

As Mayor, I am proud to support our wine and tourism industry and look forward to continuing to work with our partners to grow the Hunter Valley's visitor economy.

Hunter Valley Wine & Tourism Alliance Update

Cessnock City Council held the secretariat, chair, and host role for the Hunter Valley Wine & Tourism Alliance in 2025, taking over from Singleton Council. I have had the pleasure of chairing two Alliance meetings, with a further meeting scheduled for November 2025. As the newly elected Cessnock City Mayor and new to the Alliance, it was timely to review the Terms of Reference, originally endorsed in 2015, to ensure the governance framework continues to support effective regional collaboration.

The Alliance, through a collaborative process, aims to provide an effective single voice for the Wine and Tourism industries across the Cessnock and Singleton Local Government Areas, promoting, advancing, and developing the Hunter Valley region within NSW and beyond.

The review has focused on confirming that the Alliance continues to deliver on its core purpose: providing a framework for collaboration that strengthens the Hunter Valley as a premier wine and tourism destination.

In line with this purpose, the Alliance seeks to:

- Coordinate Destination Management Planning, implementation, and monitoring
- Foster unity between stakeholders and speak with one voice
- Strengthen and grow recognition of the Hunter Valley brand
- Increase visitor length of stay, regional spend, and dispersal
- Attract and secure funding to support regional initiatives
- Drive product, experience, and industry development
- Undertake advocacy and lobbying on behalf of the region
- Facilitate strategic partnerships and alliances that support these objectives

I am proud to represent Cessnock City Council in this Alliance and support such a dynamic industry that is vital to the Hunter Valley's economic growth. Looking ahead, the Alliance will continue to focus on governance refinement, strategic alignment, and collaborative initiatives that enhance the visitor experience, strengthen the Hunter Valley brand, and support sustainable growth across the region.

Clr Dan Watton
Mayor | Cessnock City Council

CESSNOCK CITY COUNCIL

SINGLETON COUNCIL

Another year of meeting the challenges of nationwide economic and social pressures has been weathered gracefully by the people and businesses in our region. Yet despite rising inflation and cost-of-living expenses, Singleton's visitor economy remained strong. Visitor expenditure totalled $177 million (Remplan), up 10% from the previous year – a testament to the resilience and appeal of our region.

Broke was once again recognised as one of NSW's most outstanding regional destinations, claiming consecutive silver at the 2025 NSW Top Tourism Town Awards. This recognition reflects the strength of our visitor offering and reinforces the importance of continuing to promote what makes our region unique.

Building on this momentum, Council has developed a destination brand to attract visitors, residents, workers and investors to the Singleton LGA. The *'Super. Easy. Singleton.'* campaign will continue to roll out in the year ahead, celebrating our country lifestyle, vibrant events and welcoming community, with a particular focus on metropolitan audiences. We're also excited to be launching Singleton's first dedicated investment attraction website – *Singleton Hunter Valley* – in late 2025. This major milestone of the Singleton Innovation and Investment Program, funded by the NSW Government's Resources for Regions initiative, will feature a local jobs board, a comprehensive business directory and a tourism directory showcasing visitor experiences and attractions across the region.

In 2024–2025, Council continued its close collaboration with Cessnock City Council, the Hunter Valley Wine and Tourism Association and Destination Sydney Surrounds North through the Hunter Valley Wine Tourism Alliance and Working Group. We also signed a Memorandum of Understanding with the Port Authority of New South Wales to promote and grow cruise visitation to the Regional Port, enhance the cruise passenger experience, and maximise the economic benefit of cruise visitation across the Hunter Valley.

Following the success of last year's hospitality training program, Council will again support regional skills development by delivering a new hospitality skills program as part of the Singleton Skills and Employment initiative.

Since the adoption of the Hunter Valley Destination Management Plan (DMP) by Singleton and Cessnock City councils in 2023, more than a dozen priority projects have been delivered. Complementing the DMP, Council has also adopted the *Vineyards Rural Tourism Strategy* and drafted a *Visitor Economy Action Plan*, providing a clear roadmap for future tourism growth.

Council's flagship events – *Twilight* (Australia Day Eve), *Firelight* and *Christmas on John Street* – were again highlights of the annual calendar, drawing large crowds of residents and visitors and receiving excellent feedback. We were also proud to continue to support a range of successful community-run events including the *Singleton Art Prize, Around Hermitage's D'Vine Wine + Food Festival, Broke Fordwich's Broke BBQ Festival* and the *Broke Village Fair* – all of which contribute to the region's growing calendar of major food and wine experiences.

In 2024–2025, Singleton Arts and Cultural Centre continued to build its reputation as a destination for exceptional exhibitions, with its dynamic program of events and workshops that enrich our local arts scene guided by the adopted *Singleton Arts + Cultural Centre Strategy 2025–2029*.

For those seeking adventure, upgrades to both the Maison Dieu and Pioneer Road Mountain Bike Parks further cemented Singleton's status as an emerging mountain-biking destination.

Singleton is proud to work alongside our tourism operators, the HVWTA, Cessnock City Council and Destination Sydney Surrounds North in what has been another successful year for our region. I look forward to continuing our shared efforts to enhance the visitor experience and strengthen the prosperity of our communities and economy. As the Hunter Valley continues to offer distinct tourism and lifestyle experiences, I have no doubt that our collaboration will remain instrumental in continuing to build our world-class destination that people from across the globe are proud to explore and connect with.

Clr Sue Moore
Mayor | Singleton Council

SINGLETON COUNCIL

DESTINATION SYDNEY SURROUNDS NORTH

Destination Sydney Surrounds North (DSSN) is one of seven Destination Networks (DNs) established in New South Wales (NSW). DSSN covers ten Local Government Areas (LGAs), including both Cessnock and Singleton. The primary responsibility of DSSN is to drive the growth of the visitor economy across the region, supporting the NSW Government's vision of becoming the premier visitor economy in the Asia-Pacific by 2035.

This goal, outlined in the Visitor Economy Strategy 2035 (VES2035) released earlier this year, targets $95 billion in total visitor expenditure, with approximately $44 billion (48%) expected to be generated in regional NSW. A key focus of this new strategy is to leverage the state's diverse range of visitor experiences to attract more travellers to NSW. DSSN acknowledges the important work of the Hunter Valley Wine and Tourism Association (HVWTA) in driving product development and creating compelling visitor experiences for the region.

In November 2024, Destination NSW hosted an NSW First Workshop in the Hunter Valley, focused on selling regional experiences to international markets. The workshop was one of the most well-attended across the state, and post-event engagement was among the strongest to date, with four Hunter Valley products now working closely with the DNSW Product Team to become fully export ready and actively selling their experiences to international travel operators. DSSN also commends HVWTA's ongoing investment in representing the region at major trade shows such as ATE and AIME, which play a vital role in promoting the Hunter Valley on a global stage.

It has been a pleasure collaborating with HVWTA, Cessnock, and Singleton Councils on a range of initiatives over recent years, all contributing to the continued growth of the regional visitor economy.

DSSN has also previously reported on its work in improving digital connectivity across the region, noting that HVWTA's reports significantly contributed to the KPMG business case, which received support from the Department of Regional NSW. This business case has since been referenced in a broader strategy developed by The Committee for the Hunter, which continues to advocate for improved digital infrastructure across the region.

DSSN would like to take this opportunity to acknowledge HVWTA, along with Cessnock and Singleton Councils, for their leadership and collaboration through the Hunter Valley Alliance, which has delivered significant and positive visitor economy outcomes. The Hunter Valley continues to stand out as one of NSW's premier destinations, offering a strong mix of export-ready products and business event capabilities.

DSSN congratulates the Hunter Valley Wine and Tourism Association on its outstanding contribution to strengthening and advancing the region's visitor economy.

Glenn Caldwell
General Manager | Destination Sydney Surrounds North

NSW WINE INDUSTRY ASSOCIATION

Despite ongoing policy and commercial challenges, 2024/25 was a positive year for expanding NSW Wine's activities, growing our partnership base and delivering activities for all our members. The Hunter Valley Wine and Tourism Association and Hunter Valley wineries have been an important part of this growth. Over the past 12-months, led by member feedback, NSW Wine's advocacy has remained focussed on government procurement, CDS, domestic marketing support from Wine Australia, the extension of viticulture programs and ensuring we maintain strong working relationships with key politicians, government and strategic partners. Hunter Valley MPs Dave Layzell and Clayton Barr continue to be fantastic allies here.

Over the past 123-months NSW Wine concluded $1 million export program (focussed on China and SE Asia, expanded our domestic marketing reach through partnerships with Vivid, Good Food, Carriageworks, The Rocks and Destination NSW, launched Weather as a Service, refreshed the Regional Program, and saw AgSkilled renewed for another year.

As an association we are working with an increasingly broad range of delivery partners and have diversified what we do to support members better while maintaining a strong focus on our core advocacy role. As we move into FY26 wine bottle's inclusion in container deposit schemes and the governments overreach into how land tax is collected will be where our energies are focussed in the advocacy space and given the impact these two issues could have on a business's profitability will do everything in a power to reduce their impact as much as we can.

NSW Wine's Five-Year Strategy concludes this year, and through 2026 we will continue to listen to members, seek feedback, and refine what we do before refreshing the strategy later this year. HVWTA will have the opportunity to provide input into this.

On a final note, I would like to personally thank the Hunter Valley Wine and Tourism Association for its ongoing support and engagement over the past year, particularly President Chris Tyrrell, CEO Jennie Curran and our Hunter Valley Board Members Geoff

Matthew Jessop
Executive Officer | NSW Wine Industry Association

CORPORATE PARTNERS

We would like to thank our incredibly valuable Corporate Partners for their continued support.

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