

SA Farmer

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SPRING 2025



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fields to your fork**

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Welcome to SA Farmer, Spring 2025 edition

Welcome to the spring 2025 edition of the SA Farmer publication.

SA Farmer is produced by the hard-working team at Taylor Group Media, with Riverland, Mallee and Lower North-based journalists dedicated to finding stories worth telling about the regions' primary producers, business owners and industry experts.

This edition has been produced as a challenging year continues throughout the South Australian primary production sector.

Drought conditions being experienced across the state's regions have taken a harsh toll, with record-low rainfall totals seen in many areas causing both economic and mental health challenges for farmers.

However, as always SA Farmer showcases the stories of creativity and innovative development that keep agriculture going.

Featured in this issue is an in-depth look at the drought, with perspectives from farmers based at Lameroo, and in the Riverland.

This edition also includes a detailed breakdown of the 2025 wine grape crush for both the Riverland and Barossa Valley regions, with oversupply and pricing still creating issues in the sector.

Unique producers such as a Barossa craft brewery are showcased, along with a working dog trainer.

Check out other great feature stories on a couple's ongoing journey

with a lavender farm, and a well-known Waikerie butcher's takeover of a Riverland abattoir.

The popular SA Farmer growing guide once again provides readers with information needed to grow the best winter fruit and vegetables, while the regular rainfall report gives an insight into how rain levels are comparing at this time of year compared to 2024.

The publication would not be what it is without the added support of advertisers, and the production team behind the scenes.

We hope you enjoy the spring 2025 edition of SA Farmer and, until next time, keep updated online by visiting the free-to-read website (www.safarmer.com.au).

- The SA Farmer team



Like many across SA, Holder-based farmer Tim Paschke has struggled with ongoing drought conditions through 2025.

**COVER PHOTO:
SEBASTIAN CALDERON**

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SA Farmer

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SA drought devastating farming communities

WORDS BEVAN JONES

SOUTH Australia is currently dealing with what many experts are calling the worst drought in its recorded history.

The horrific dry spell has devastated crops, destroyed pastures and pushed rural communities to the brink, with some farmers having to make the difficult decision to sell either their stock, or properties.

While South Australia has experienced droughts before, the current conditions — ongoing since the early 2020s — have been uniquely severe.

Rainfall across key farming regions has been well below average for consecutive years. In some areas, 2023 and 2024 delivered less than half the normal annual precipitation.

This recently prompted a visit from Prime Minister Anthony Albanese to South Australia, where he had the opportunity to meet with farmers and see the difficulties and challenges that they are facing.

This included a visit to a grain and livestock producer on the Adelaide Plains, a sign the Federal

Government was acknowledging and understanding the severe impact of South Australia’s worst drought in living memory.

Financial strain is mounting on farmers and many of them have drained their savings and taken on debt to keep operations going. Rural banks are reporting an increase in loan defaults, and farm equipment sales have virtually halted.

Emotional tolls are just as dire — there has been a noticeable spike in mental health issues across farming communities, with isolation, anxiety, and hopelessness becoming daily struggles.

During Mr Albanese’s recent visit it was announced further funding would be available to the Rural Financial Counselling Service (RFCS), and that the National Drought Forum will be moved from Victoria to Gawler.

Grain Producers SA (GPSA) welcomed the visit, but chief executive officer Brad Perry said immediate financial support for farmers needed to follow as he addressed the scale and urgency of the drought that was gripping the state.

“While the measures announced today are welcome, the reality on the ground for South Australian grain producers are that we need

significantly more immediate and practical support,” he said.

“GPSA successfully advocated for the Federal Agriculture Minister (Julie Collins) to visit South Australia... where we hosted her on a farm tour and took part in an industry roundtable to present practical support options on behalf of grain producers.

“The Prime Minister’s visit is a strong signal that the Federal Government recognises the severity of the challenges facing South Australia’s grain sector — but that recognition must now be matched with immediate, on-the-ground support for impacted farming families.

“This drought is not a distant threat — it’s happening right now. Many farmers are experiencing severe cash flow constraints and are being forced to make incredibly difficult decisions about their future.”

The additional \$2m in contingency funding to the RFCS has supported more producers to access financial counselling and advice if they need it, but Mr Perry stressed “advice alone will not be enough”.

“Boosting financial counselling services will help some producers navigate tough decisions, and the RFCS is a critical support mechanism to help farmers through this difficult time, but without tangible financial relief such as low, or non-interest loans, too many growers will be left without a viable path forward,” he said.

“Support must include direct mechanisms that ease financial pressure — not just prepare producers for future challenges.

“The decision to bring the National Drought Forum to South Australia is a positive gesture but gestures alone are not enough in responding to the current situation.

“What’s needed is urgent, co-ordinated action that delivers real relief to those feeling the effects of this drought season — not simply more long-term ‘resilience’ talk.”

Mr Perry said GPSA will continue to work with all levels of government to secure meaningful drought support measures for the state’s grain producers.



Convoy of feed on its way to drought-ravaged South Australia. PHOTO: Farmers Across Borders



In most cropping areas last year was the worst rainfall on record for a hundred plus years and this year it is tracking even worse...

“Damage to infrastructure was just another thing to add to pressure on producers.

“A recent survey showed that 30 per cent of the time farmers were dry sowing, compared to 60% the year before, it also showed that farmers were waiting for subsoil to build and that didn’t come so we’d imagine that most of them would’ve gone out and dry sewed.

“In most cropping areas last year was the worst rainfall on record for a hundred-plus years and this year it is tracking even worse and that’s why we are calling on federal and state government support.

“Unless we get support or rainfall, farmers are going to struggle to have finance next season to put crops in, we really need substantial opening rainfall and winter rain.

“With the lack of rain the confidence of farmers has dropped right down, a recent survey showed that their confidence in the season ahead has dropped down. From a recent survey it was a four out of ten in confidence this season, whereas the previous year it was a six out of ten.”

Mr Perry said farmers were having to pull back on their rotations of crops.

“Depending on the region, it has been generally too dry in a lot of places for canola, most varieties are being planted where they normally get planted but if anything the rotations are being pulled back so there is not as much area being planted as they would if it was a bit wetter,” he said.

“Wheat, lentils, barley, peas etc. will probably still get sewn but just in a reduced capacity and this is mainly due to not having that subsoil moisture, its bone dry out there which makes it hard to plan ahead as they don’t know what rain is coming.

“Farmers will do everything they can to get the best crops they can and even if the dry continues they’ll make important decisions to get through it.”

Lynton Barrett is a sheep and grain producer from Elljay Farms, in Lamerloo, and has been in the farming game for more than 40 years with his wife Suzanne, and in recent years his son Josh and partner Lucy. They farm approximately 4500ha with dryland cropping and irrigated crops for their main business.

Mr Barrett said while it was the driest he had ever seen it in SA in the past 18 months, the way things had changed in farming methods meant that they were getting through it okay.

“Conserving moisture and no-till seeding practices have enabled us to produce crops on minimal rainfall. For us personally, a reduction in sheep numbers over the past 2 years has allowed us to maintain ground cover which has decreased soil erosion considerably,” he said.

The 2025 cropping program commenced in the middle of April. Dry sowing has become a common practice for the Barretts, and also for the Lamerloo district in general.

Mr Barrett said there had been some promising results with their crops.

“Sowing dry is something we approach with a lot of confidence this season as we had subsoil moisture from thunderstorms at the end of 2024. When the season did break for us in mid-to-late May, the germination of our crops has been excellent,” he said.

“For June we have had around 50mm of rain so the season is progressing positively. Hopefully we see general rains throughout SA during winter and spring, as I know some areas are still rainfall deficient.”

Government support has been varied and criticised

in some areas as being inadequate.

Mr Barrett said funding provided by the State Government had been very helpful, although he said he could understand while it wasn’t beneficial for everyone.

“The funding from state government has really helped our business. We have been able to upgrade some of our drought strategies as a result of the subsidies that we received,” he said.

“The greatest challenge in dry times is not knowing when the season will break. This can be a testing time for anyone in the agriculture game, so mental health care is high on the agenda.

“I believe there are great support programs for businesses and individuals affected by stressful times, but the challenge is to get people to reach out and utilise them. We are fortunate in the Southern Mallee to have a very supportive community.”

While the immediate future remains uncertain, many farmers remain cautiously hopeful.

Long-range forecasts hint at a potential easing of conditions later in 2025 if La Niña patterns return. The current drought has made one thing clear, South Australia must rethink how it supports and sustains its agricultural backbone in the face of an increasingly volatile climate.

For the farmers of South Australia, the road ahead is still dusty and dry – but they continue to walk it, driven by resilience, community, and an unbreakable bond with the land they call home.



“In the immediate term, we are calling for more direct support to help producers manage household and business costs, including quick and easy to access concessional or interest-free loan options, freight assistance, council rate rebates and further mental health support that reaches the farm gate,” he said.

“In the longer term, we’re also calling for a review of the outdated Farm Household Allowance asset threshold, and for a serious look at the Regional Investment Corporation’s loan settings to ensure they’re meeting the needs of the agriculture industry.”

For South Australian farmers, the effects have been nothing short of heartbreaking. Wheat and barley growers have seen yields plummet or fail entirely. Livestock producers are facing skyrocketing feed costs as natural pastures disappear. Some families are being forced to truck in water just to survive.

Despite the crisis, South Australian farmers are known for their grit. Many have turned to innovative strategies to weather the storm. Some are experimenting with drought-resistant crop varieties or adopting regenerative farming techniques aimed at retaining soil moisture. Others are reducing herd sizes to preserve water and feed.

Communities are also rallying. Local charities and councils have launched food and water relief programs, while mental health support services have been expanded thanks to state and federal funding. Online support networks, peer groups, and rural counselling services like Rural Aid, and Lifeline, are playing crucial roles in keeping farmers connected and supported.

As farmers look to the year ahead Mr Perry said there were genuine concerns regarding a lack of rainfall and depleted sub-soil moisture, and some grain producers were holding off on sowing.

He also said the recent weather event that involved dust and wind had also made the situation worse.

“A lot of dry sowing has been happening and this has been forced due to drought and dry conditions although some grain producers have been holding off on sowing and instead waiting for a bit of moisture relief.

“Some patchy rain falling in some areas has helped but the recent weather events with more dust and wind certainly wasn’t helpful as it was blowing top soil around which wasn’t good and heartbreaking for farmers.

Rain levels

Storages

(as at July 30)

RENMARK
1 May to 1 August 2025: 30.6mm
Rainfall to 1 August 2025: 47.6mm
Rainfall to 1 August 2024: 110.6mm

LOXTON
1 February to 25 April 2025: 38.6mm
Rainfall to 1 August 2025: 60.8mm
Rainfall to 1 August 2024: 110.9mm

WAIKERIE
1 May to 1 August 2025: 38.2mm
Rainfall to 1 August 2025: 48.8mm
Rainfall to 1 August 2024: 105mm

LAMEROO
1 May to 1 August 2025: 95.8mm
Rainfall to 1 August 2025: 112.2mm
Rainfall to 1 August 2024: 96.4mm

GAWLER
1 May to 1 August 2025: 123.8mm
Rainfall to 1 August 2025: 143.8mm
Rainfall to 1 August 2024: 123.8mm

MENINDEE LAKES: 79 per cent full

DARTMOUTH: 67 per cent full

HUME: 46 per cent full

LAKE VICTORIA: 64 per cent full

FLOWS INTO SA: 3500ML/day





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Lee's best mates

WORDS & PHOTOGRAPHY

MADISON EASTMOND

LOXTON'S Lee Mickan has been teaching young dogs new tricks for the past two decades, with his team of working dogs one of the most valuable assets across many Riverland livestock properties.

Originally from Pinnaroo, Mr Mickan and his pack of eight dogs work the Riverland together as part of his Livestock Contracting business.

Though beginning with kelpies — receiving his first pup at the age of 19 — overtime Mr Mickan's team has also come to include border collies that work mainly sheep, but also cattle and goats.

"It's been 26 years since my first dog, and I still love

the training," he said.

"I don't believe there is much of a difference between kelpies and border collies.

"There is good and bad in both breeds, and it is very much down to the individual dog and its temperament.

"I have a strong team of up to eight dogs, with our one senior dog Toby working part time — he loves the work so much, so we can't retire him completely.

"He has a good and strong natural bark, so he's always a great help."



4



There is nothing like taking your best mates to work every day.

Along with their work on the ground, Mr Mickan and his pack are also renowned titleholders of many dog and sheep trials across the country, with his six-year-old kelpie Gus set to compete in the Australian Utility Champion for South Australia this month.

“We compete in all forms of sheep training — I have lost count how many opens I may have won,” he said.

“Currently, we have five state Yard titles, one state Utility title, and have been runners up on numerous occasions.

“Many people often ask me if I have two teams of dogs: one for the work, and another for show.

“But the thing is, if the dog isn’t cut out for the job, they will never be cut out for competition.”

To maintain the quality of dog needed, Mr Mickan said he and his family have been breeding dogs for the past 15 years, keeping one pup from every litter before selling the rest to other local farmers and dog lovers.

“I like a dog with plenty of presence and has a natural herding instinct,” he said.



Lee Mickan and his pack of eight dogs work the Riverland together as part of his Livestock Contracting business.

“It’s great when he can hop in the pen and the sheep are scared of him.

“I also look for a dog who has a lot of drive as it’s really important because these dogs are going flat out day in and day out — they’re the ultimate athletes.”

“I also like long legs and lean bodies — it makes for tall dogs who are very agile.

“Placid natures are a must for our team, especially concerning our demonstrations and competitions— we just want to have good dogs that everyone wants to come up to, give them a pat, and talk to.”

Beginning the training when the dog reaches between three to four months old, Mr Mickan said it can take up to eight months to have a confident and competent working dog ready on the job.

“The dogs really start their training by four months old when their legs are a little bit longer and they can keep up with a few quiet lambs — we want to build their confidence from the word go,”

“When they have all the basics, then they come along on the job which makes it all worth it — there is nothing like taking your best mates to work every day.”



Lee Mickan and six-year-old kelpie Gus are part of an eight-dog team that work the Riverland together, and compete as champions across the country.



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From the family fields to your fork

WORDS & PHOTOGRAPHY
BEVAN JONES



NORTH of the Adelaide CBD is a fourth-generation bunch-line vegetable grower and supplier who has continued to thrive since his family started growing quality products in the 1940s.

The business is Thorndon Park Produce, and it was founded in 1945 by Luigi De Ieso, an Italian immigrant with a humble dream that began with the basics of spring onions, radishes, and parsley, picked by hand and sold at local markets.

Today, that same land is run by his grandsons, Anthony and Danny De Ieso, who have transformed it into one of South Australia’s premier bunch vegetable producers — yet still anchored in the same values of quality, sustainability, and community.

They still grow spring onions, radishes, and parsley but now also spinach, silverbeet, beetroot and kale (green and red) all year round. You can also find their produce in the major supermarkets, independents and other outlets.

Anthony has been involved in the business for 12 years, and is a grower along with general manager of sales, distribution, and staff management.

Mr De Ieso said he had seen some changes over the years, and climate was one factor that had made it challenging at times.

“With the change in climates we have had to adapt to this in particularly with different seed varieties at different times of the year,” he said.

“We have had to undertake lots of trials to establish the best variety for the best time of year, and have adapted to ever-changing weather conditions.

“Building relationships with industry input providers such as seed and fertiliser companies has also been important.

“We have also had to readjust our machinery and use less fertiliser to get better results, as well as look at the costs of fertiliser.

“The lack of rainfall in recent times as also been challenging, as the rain helps flush the soils and helps produce a healthier crop.



"The lack of rain also means a higher stress on input costs. Our electricity costs have gone through the roof, and the lack of rain has led to an excessive use of bore water."

Mr De Ieso said it was extra rewarding to have success with the business being family run with so much history.

"It is a little unique in that I am one of a few people in my friendship circle that works in a family business, and working for your family and reporting to Dad makes it more rewarding than just collecting a paycheck," he said.

"Family is really important to me but the only downside is that at dinner time all we end up doing is talking about work. Dad always brings something up that he wants to talk to us about.

"This industry is so unique in a way that everyone knows what a vegetable is – we all eat it whether we are growers or not.

"However, most of the time when I have discussions with people, they can't tell you about where it comes from and how it ended up in their fridge, but with Thorndon Park Produce this isn't the case.

"The other rewarding part of my job is sharing with people how produce comes to their shopping basket, from using social media platforms, running programs and encouraging site visits. I find sharing the joys and fun of what I do with the general public to be very rewarding."

He said the Covid-19 pandemic had brought change with the way consumers approached things.

"When the initial restrictions and panic buying began, we saw a massive increase in sales for common vegetables like spinach, but a drastic drop in herb lines, especially when restaurants were forced to close," he said.

"As things have begun to settle and Covid-19 has become very real to the way we all live day to day, sales have continued to be fairly steady.

"Another change has been that a lot more people now cook at home and there has been a drop of sales on trickier stuff like fresh herbs but an increase in people wanting to buy things like spinach and silverbeet."

Mr De Ieso said there were certain things they had to be aware of as growers of quality produce.

"The key to growing quality produce is to be aware of weather patterns and what they might bring, for example, with heavy rain and humid or warm-to-hot summers then we need to look out for bacterial diseases like fungicide," he said.

"We also have regular communication with agronomists that we deal with directly, and we are continually adapting and learning. You need to be on top of insect behaviour and when they like to attack."

Another change has been a focus on more supermarket representation and trying to maximise the profitability of their products, and they are now supplying raw bulk product lines as a cost-effective

measure to encounter rising input costs.

Mr De Ieso said he loved supplying the SA and interstate markets with Thorndon Park products, the different relationships that he has built over the years, and the business and non-business conversations that he has with customers and others from the industry.

Mr De Ieso was also recognised as a finalist for a prestigious awards ceremony at Brisbane in June. He was nominated for the Muirs Community Stewardship Award, and the Corteva Agriscience Young Grower of the Year.

The 2025 Horticulture Awards ceremony was held during the Hort Connections Gala Dinner, held in June, marking the culmination of Hort Connections 2025, in Brisbane.

As the Southern Hemisphere's largest horticulture industry Conference, Hort Connections was jointly hosted by AUSVEG and the International Fresh Produce Association Australia-New Zealand (IFPA ANZ).

Hort Connections 2025 was held at the Brisbane Convention and Exhibition Centre from June 4 to 6, with delegates attending from around Australia, New Zealand, and the globe.

If you want to see what they are up to on the farm you can search for Anthony De Ieso on YouTube, where he talks more about the different projects and trials that are being undertaken.

You can also find Thorndon Park Produce via the website (www.thorndonparkproduce.com.au/) and via their Facebook page (www.facebook.com/people/Thorndon-Park-Produce/100063716430179/).

Anthony De Ieso is the fourth-generation of his family to be involved with Thorndon Park Produce, based in Angle Vale, after it was founded in the 1940s.



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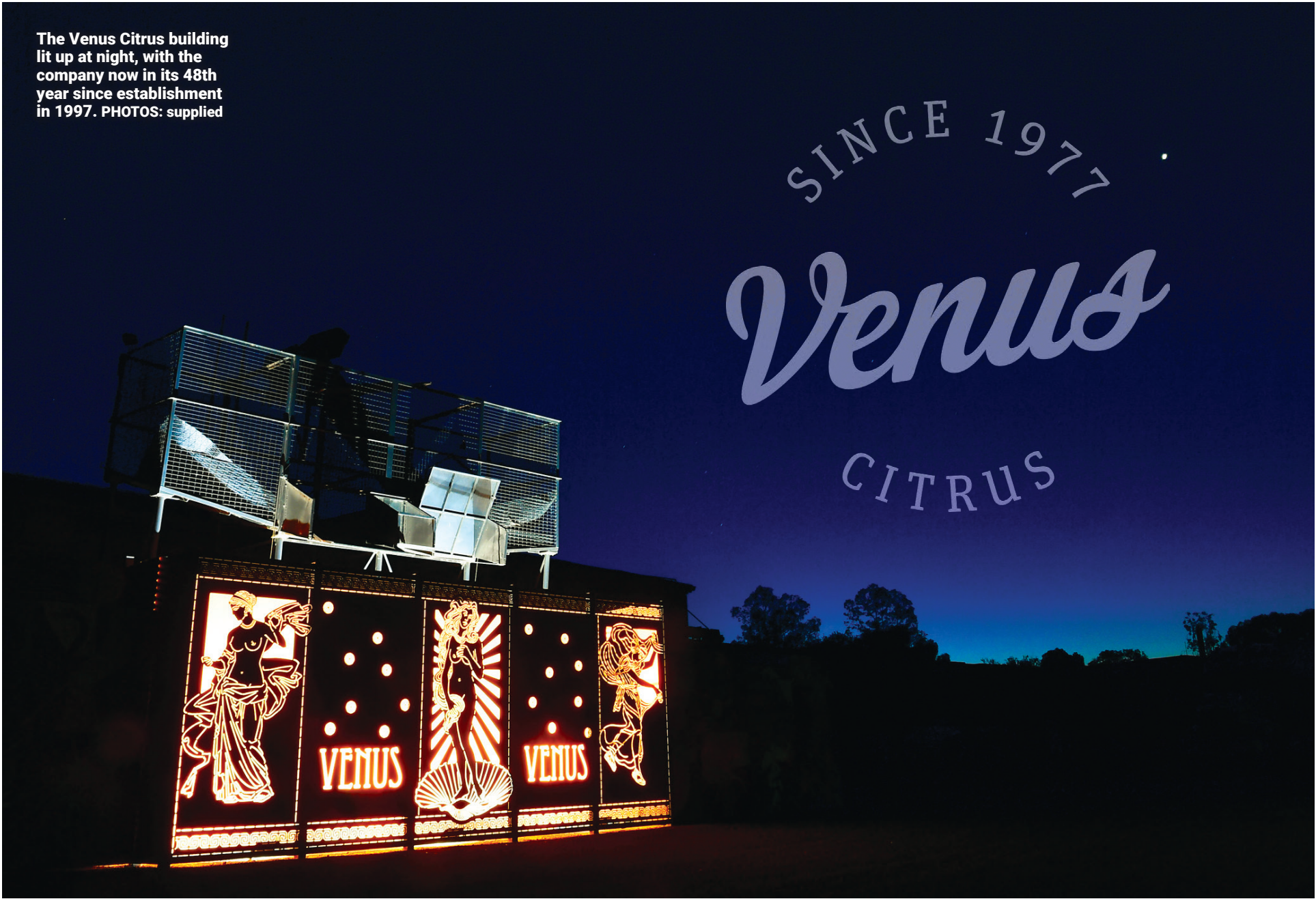
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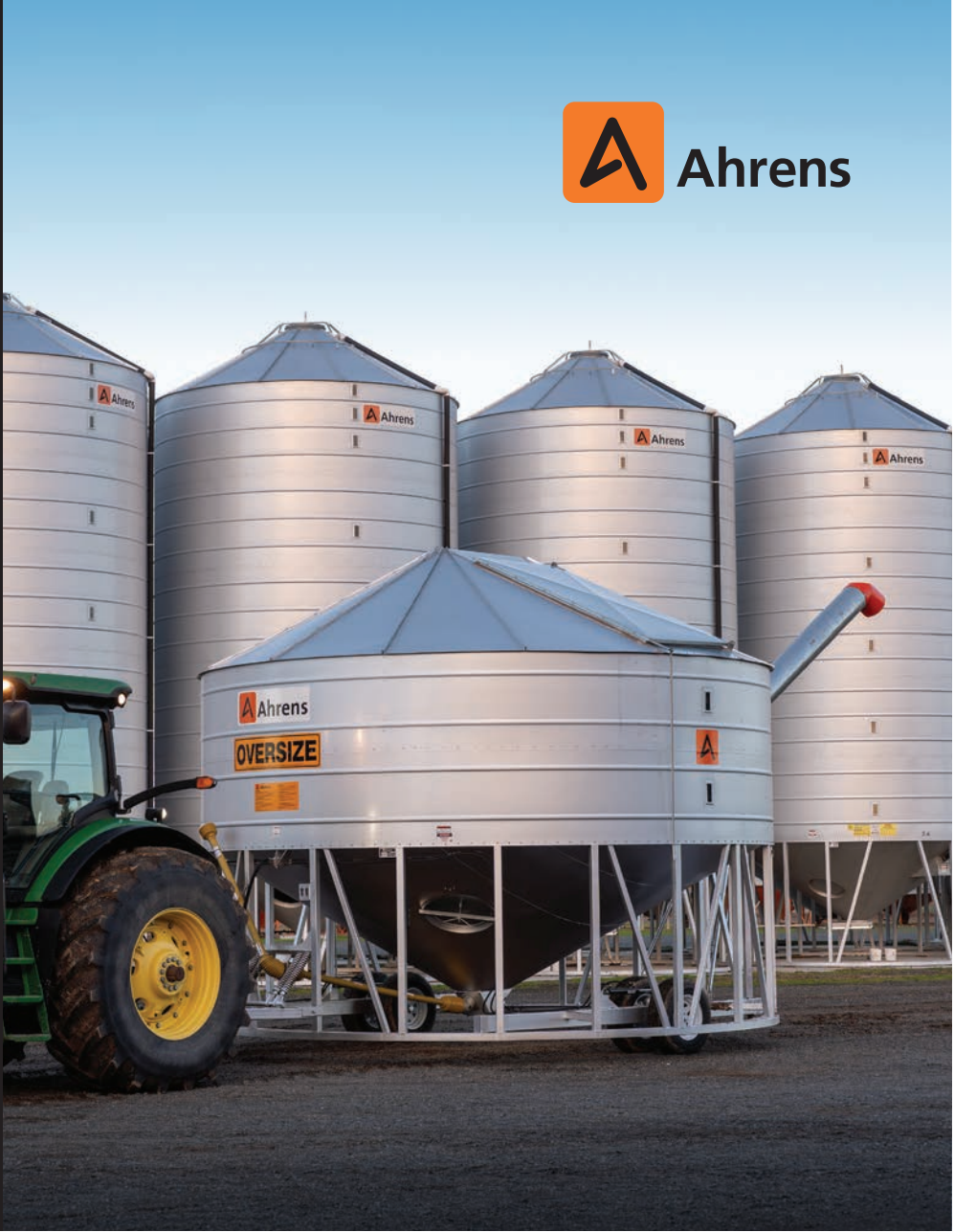


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Squeezing to perfection at Venus Citrus

WORDS LACHLAN DAND

IT is little secret that the Riverland is known for its citrus production, and it's something deeply rooted in the lives of growers across the region.

The region's climate is one of the key reasons helping produce some of the freshest citrus in the world, and Venus Citrus, in Loxton, has been a driving force since it's establishment in 1977.

Venus Citrus is located 257km from the Adelaide CBD, and has grown from a humble family operation, first generated by Peter Costi, into a thriving business with reach all over the world.

Known for its premium quality oranges, lemons, and mandarins, the company has built its reputation on community, innovation, sustainability, and consistency.

In an age where consumer demand for fresh products is at an all-time high, Venus Citrus is taking the expectations of its customers to the next level.

Venus Citrus' marketing sales manager Maria Costi said production continues to grow for the business, and 2025 has been one of the biggest yet.

"We're expecting to process in excess of 25,000 ton this season," Ms Costi said.

"That is an increase of approximately 20 per cent this season, and this is due to an increase in volume of varieties such as Cara Cara, Afourer, and Ippolitio

Blood Oranges.

"We do have a new variety of blood oranges – Ippolitio Seedless Blood Orange – developed in Sicily.

"There is always the possibility for growth and expansion in the growing, packing and marketing side of the business."

When Mr Costi moved to the Riverland with his family in the 1970s, he soon established himself as a grower in the region, and began packing his own fruit, and selling it at the Melbourne market.

In 1977, a citrus packing shed on Loxton's Gratwick Road went on the market, and Mr Costi made a purchase, and started the company 'P. Costi and Sons', followed by registering the brand name of Venus Citrus.

Fast forwarding to 2025, Ms Costi said the company is looking to tap into emerging markets right across the globe.

"At the moment we supply to all states in Australia, and to all of the main supermarkets," she said.

"The key markets for export globally are Japan, the USA, and China.

"Europe and the Middle East are definitely markets that we feel have the most potential for growth.

"Our packhouse, and several of



The Afourer Mandarin's have been a very popular selection in 2025.

our growers have been Freshcare Environmentally Certified since 2014.

"We are very focused and passionate about this and are working with all of our growers to get them all environmentally certified in the next couple of years."

Having an emphasis on health and sustainability have been some of the most important values which Venus Citrus chooses to uphold.

Managing director Eleni Aggeletos said "my personal passion has always been caring for our environment and eating good, clean, healthy products grown as nature had intended."

Venus Citrus have also long been

involved in the Riverland community, and recently supplied junior netballers with refreshments at the SA Country Championships carnival held in June.

"In terms of environmental sustainability, reduction is the application of synthetic chemicals and fertilisers," Ms Costi said.

"Having clean air, as well as less pesticides and exhaust pollutions gives us an increase in biodiversity.

"It is very important for us to be involved in the community, and we are major sponsors in several sporting clubs in the area.

"We have also partnered up with the McGrath Foundation this year."





WEA helping South Aussies known, and enjoy wine

WORDS BEVAN JONES

SOUTH Australia's rich wine heritage is getting the grassroots recognition it deserves, thanks to a passionate suburban initiative by the Workers' Educational Association (WEA).

The short course, Know Your Wine - Enjoy Your Wine, is delivered in Adelaide and is educating everyday Australians with the knowledge and confidence to better appreciate, select, and understand the wines of our

premier regions, including the world-renowned Barossa Valley.

The course is delivered in Adelaide by experienced wine educator David Crossman, who has previously judged wine overseas.

Know Your Wine - Enjoy Your Wine is a one-session course designed for those who want to better understand what's in their glass.

It breaks down wine fundamentals into approachable concepts, offering a practical and sensory introduction to wine appreciation.

It will also help beginners or seasoned wine drinkers to be more confident in choosing a wine for any occasion, and which wine pairs well with what foods.

Participants will also learn why

they might like a particular wine, and all of this while enjoying the cheerful approach of Mr Crossman, who has taught wine at WEA since 1994.

He holds qualifications in wine studies, and has judged wine in France, at the Concours Agricole de Paris.

Previously involved in marketing, he started off as a fill-in, before taking over as the course educator.

He has a background in secondary and adult education, combined with hands-on experience in wine retail and wholesaling.

Mr Crossman said to enjoy wine it was important to understand what you were drinking.

"When people visit the Barossa or South Australian wine regions, we want them to understand why a shiraz might taste fuller-bodied here, or what to look for on a label that indicates a quality drop, it's about confidence and connection," he said.

"I love my wine and I am enthusiastic about it and coming from an education background, I can't help myself as a teacher and I like to let people know what wine is all about.

"Someone started it up years before, I filled in and was working full time at WEA at the time in marketing and



The WEA's Know Your Wine - Enjoy Your Wine course helps all wine enthusiasts increase their understanding of South Australian wines.



education, and when this person left I thought what better person to do it than me.

"With wine you know there is always something new coming up and you never stop learning.

"If you want to enjoy wine you have to learn more about it, different regions have different things to offer.

"The short course, Know Your Wine - Enjoy Your Wine gives participants the ability to discover and appreciate the time and effort that goes into making quality wines.

"Awareness that comes with education and the WEA course is a great way to help the community recognise the winemaking work that goes on in the regions.

"The result of the WEA course is a greater appreciation of wine, an improved vocabulary to describe it, and greater confidence when selecting wine in shops, restaurants, or wineries."

Whether you're a curious beginner or a wine lover, the course helps participants explore why wine styles taste the way they do, how to judge the quality of a wine, and how to interpret the Australian regional classification and labelling system to find the best quality and value.

WEA, established in 1913, is Australia's largest non-government adult community education provider and offers hundreds of short courses, and Know Your Wine - Enjoy Your Wine, is a perfect example of how the WEA connects people with skills that enrich daily life.

WEA chief executive officer Lesley Venning said she "couldn't be prouder" of the culture that has been cultivated by this course and other courses like it.

"WEA offers nearly 1000 short courses each year, to more than 10,000 students across locations... across a broad range of topics, if you think of it

we probably run it," she said.

"We are incredibly proud that a course like Know Your Wine - Enjoy Your Wine is able to connect individuals to our wine regions.

"It also helps by deepening course participants with an appreciation for the Barossa and neighbouring areas.

"Courses like Know Your Wine - Enjoy Your Wine have always been incredibly popular at WEA, with tutors like David educating participants for over 30 years.

"It is important for people to better understand what wine pairs well with different foods, and it helps people to make good choices.

"It gives us the opportunity to showcase regions like the Barossa, and wineries provide their wines and use them in our courses, so it's a bit of self-promotion for promoting their wineries."

Mr Crossman said he had learned there were different styles of wine that were suitable for each region.

"When it comes to the Barossa, obviously shiraz is the big one, but I am also interested in grenache and the grenache blends out there, and the Barossa is also famous for their GSMs," he said

"The same way that the Clare Valley is famous for their riesling. People that do the course will learn about this sort of thing and I am always learning all the time as well, even though I have been teaching for so many years, there is always things that change and obviously the weather has a bit to do with this."

He said the keys to making a great Barossa shiraz were all about the grapes, and with the region being a fairly warm climate, these were fairly ripe.

He also emphasised the Barossa also included Eden Valley, which

generally had a slighter cooler climate, which translated into the shiraz.

Mr Crossman also had concern about producing the quantities of grapes for the next vintage due to the lack of rainfall, which was bad for the vineyards.

To find out more about WEA and the courses available visit the website (www.wea-sa.com.au/) and this will also provide more details about the Know Your Wine - Enjoy Your Wine course, and other wine and food courses that are run by WEA.



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Brett Reimann has grown his passion for home-brewing craft beer into the well-known Ministry of Beer brewery, with a popular taproom located in Lyndoch.



Brewery success in a Heaven of vineyards

WORDS & PHOTOGRAPHY BEVAN JONES

IN a location where vineyards dominate the landscape, a unique brewery is making its mark and putting beer on the map in the Barossa Valley.

That brewery is the iconic Ministry of Beer, the heart of craft brewing in Lyndoch, offering a refreshing detour for those seeking a craft beer experience in the wine country.

Their passion and dedication to crafting exceptional beers has taken shape over the years, starting from their first barrel-aged creation, to the vibrant venue in

operation today.

The story of Ministry of Beer began in 2016, when passionate home-brewer Brett Reimann decided to turn his hobby into a profession.

Starting in a shed on his hobby farm in Rosedale, Mr Reimann’s initial setup included a 200L brewhouse and 400L fermenters. His dedication to crafting exceptional barrel-aged sours set the foundation for what would become a beloved local brewery.

Mr Reimann was balancing this with his work in

the construction industry, but his real dream was to start his own brewery, and in 2021 this became reality when Ministry of Beer expanded its reach by opening a taproom, in Lyndoch.

Mr Reimann said there was some risk in opening a brewery in the Barossa where there were so many wineries, however there were also some positives about this.

“The good thing about opening a brewery in the Barossa Valley and Lyndoch is that regional breweries

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go well, because you have lots of tourists visiting whereas it's more of a challenge for those breweries in the city," he said.

"Yes most of the tourism in the Barossa is because of wine, but there is also only so much wine that you can drink in a day, and some people may visit a few wineries in a day and think to themselves, I wouldn't mind a beer after a day of drinking wine, so it does provide a point of difference."

Ministry of Beer offers visitors a chance to sample up to 16 beers on tap, including limited releases and seasonal specialties. The taproom also serves locally produced wines, spirits, and ciders, catering to a variety of palates.

One of their most popular beers is the iconic raspberry sour, and Mr Reimann revealed the enthusiasm had taken time to grow.

"It's ironic, when we first started the sour beers about 10 years ago we couldn't sell them, then we tried to add a raspberry flavour to them and it took a while, but then all of a sudden it took off and it became our most popular beer," he said.

"I think it's because not many in SA are doing it and people's tastes have changed overtime, even now zero alcohol has become more popular.

"The raspberry sour is particularly popular in summer."

Another breakthrough for Ministry of Beer came when they released the Old Timer golden sour beer, which ultimately premiered at the 2017 Adelaide Beer and BBQ Festival, and earned acclaim and a spot in the Craft Pint's Best New SA Beers of 2017.

Since that time, Ministry of Beer has expanded and developed a diverse range of fruited sours.

They have also created a core range for craft beer enthusiasts. With an increasing number of barrels, their commitment to quality brewing remains strong and they are solidifying their reputation in the Australian craft beer landscape.

Ministry of Beer has expanded and developed a diverse range of fruited sours. With an increasing number of barrels, their commitment to quality brewing remains strong, and they are solidifying their reputation in the Australian craft beer landscape.

Mr Reimann said he was very proud of how far he had come since starting the brewery.

"It's pretty amazing to think that over 10 years ago I was working in construction and not really enjoying it, and so I was having to work extra hard on weekends

and after hours with the home brewing while working the construction job," he said.

"That was lots of hours and opening the brewery was definitely the biggest highlight, as I didn't know if it was going to happen or not.

"It was always a bit risky opening a brewery where it's so wine dominant, but we wanted to give people that point of difference and it's paid off in spades.

"There were five breweries in the Barossa, but now it's only three, so you need to keep having success otherwise we will be in the same boat as some of those other breweries that are no longer around."

Mr Reimann said consistency was important and a key to their success.

"We try to have a consistent product and that has been the key of keeping our brewery alive," he said.

"We haven't changed too much and people like different beers, so we keep it consistent.

"In the Barossa where there are so many wineries this is so important, and is what makes us stand out in the craft beer movement."

Mr Reimann exporting beer overseas or interstate

was unnecessary, as they get enough sales from online purchases and stores.

Mr Reimann and his team are committed to quality and flavour and this is reflected in every brew that they create.

Their journey in the craft-brewing world has led to them exploring innovative techniques, all celebrated within their vibrant brewery.

Their range includes barrel-aged sours, fruited sours, and seasonal brews that showcase creativity and a commitment to quality. Notable creations like the 'Strawberries & Cream' sour have garnered attention from craft beer enthusiasts.

Their commitment to fostering a sense of community is evident in their events and the welcoming environment they've cultivated at their taproom.

Ministry of Beer is located at 1 Lyndoch Valley Road, Lyndoch SA 5351. The taproom operates from 11am to 7pm, on Wednesday through to Sunday, and from 12 noon to 6pm on Mondays.

Check out their website (www.ministryofbeer.com.au/) for more information.



Mr Reimann's sour beer creations, which have included a Strawberries & Cream flavour, are popular with craft beer enthusiasts.

Farming systems in focus: early sowing, legumes, and long-term fertility

AS we progress into the 2025 season, it's clear that cropping systems are shifting — and fast. In a recent episode of Mallee Sustainable Farming's (MSF) MSF Farm Talk podcast, Nigel Wilhelm, from SARDI, joined host Nick Paltridge for a deep dive into the evolution of Mallee farming systems and where they're heading next.

With decades of experience in soil fertility, crop nutrition, and farming system research, Dr Wilhelm discusses crop agronomy and nutrition, and offers practical insights grounded in long-term trials and real-world farmer results.

More than just marginal gains, early sowing and summer weed control have been game changers in the Mallee regions.

"It's that increase in growing season — from early sowing and strict summer weed control — that's delivered massive gains," Dr Wilhelm said.

These management changes have improved yield potential even in the most marginal areas.

Legumes taking the lead
From field pea and vetch to lentil and chickpea, legumes have come a long way.

Dr Wilhelm shared findings from Mallee trials that surprised even the researchers. "We were staggered at how beneficial those legume options could be in areas once considered too

risky," he said.

What started as break crops are now holding their own as profitable components of the rotation.

MSF continues to build on this with long-term trials — backed by GRDC's RiskWiSe project, and the Mallee CMA — examining how high-legume intensity rotations perform in terms of profitability, nitrogen use efficiency, and ground cover.

2025 fertiliser strategy: think long-term

The topic of fertiliser inputs for 2025 is also discussed in the podcast, with Dr Wilhelm expressing the view that it's probably best to use a long-term outlook when developing nutrient regimes — instead of trying to fine-tune fertiliser applications based on what the crop used last year.

"What's evolving now in crop nutrition is trying to take a long-term view," he said.

"Try to keep inputs at where you have been and fertilise for a 10-year outlook."

It's timely advice for farmers planning their next moves after a tough season, especially when every input decision needs to strike a balance between cost and future productivity.

Want to hear more? Tune in to the full episode of MSF Farm Talk with Dr Wilhelm by visiting the website (www.msfp.org.au/podcast/).



SARDI's Dr Nigel Wilhelm says early sowing and summer weed control practices have been key for Mallee farmers. PHOTO: supplied



How to make the most of biofertilisers

BIOFERTILISERS are products that can improve plant health and stimulate growth. They also improve the health of the soil. There are several different products that have different beneficial actions and may be in solid or liquid form.

Inoculants are products containing living microbes that benefit the crop-soil system in some way. A good example is the rhizobia bacteria, applied to legumes to facilitate nitrogen fixing. Compost teas and extracts are inoculants that contain a diverse array of microbes which are beneficial to the soil.

Biostimulants are products without any nutrient value, but they contain hormones and plant growth stimulants. Biostimulants help to minimise abiotic and biotic crop stress. Products include liquid seaweed, humic and fulvic acid, and others.

Biofertilisers contain macro and micronutrients essential for plant growth. Nutrients are attached to a carbon source that makes them more stable. These products are better for the soil and will have no effect on soil biology when used correctly. Biofertilisers are often fermented, using microbes and carbohydrates to turn complex nutrients into biological forms. This makes them easier for plants to take up. These products are applied to the soil where the nutrients they contain are more soluble and are unrequired to be broken down by soil microbes before plants can access them.

Making biofertilisers

There are three main methods for making biological products:

- ☐ Aerobic cultures made with the use of oxygen
- ☐ Fermentation cultures that use very

little, to no oxygen

- ☐ Vermi products that have been through the gut of a worm, (worm teas or vermi cast).

Anaerobic fermentation uses little, or no oxygen, and beneficial bacteria to create a biofertiliser product that supplies readily accessible nutrients for plants, as well as supporting beneficial biology in the soil. The bacteria within the fermenting brew can survive in low, or high-oxygen environments. During the fermentation process, many different compounds known as fermentative byproducts can be produced. In a balanced and controlled ferment, the beneficial byproducts formed are vitamins, enzymes, amino acids and organic acids, creating a bio-stimulant that is good for plant and soil health.

Badly managed ferments may lead to gasses and alcohol products being formed that can be toxic to plants and soil.

Benefits of biofertilisers

Biofertilisers can be used in conjunction with conventional agricultural practices, or can form part of a more holistic approach to maintaining soil health and microbiology while increasing plant growth. Using biofertilisers may result in plants being able to cope better with environmental stresses, as well as improved uptake of nutrients and stimulating root growth. Biofertilisers have a good shelf life of six-to-12 months if sealed tightly in a container, but should be checked regularly.

If you want to learn more about making biofertilisers on farm, a series of informative videos can be viewed by visiting the website (www.landscape.sa.gov.au/mr/land-and-farming/soils/bio-fertilisers).

Using biofertilisers may result in plants being able to cope better with environmental stresses...

AG NEWS

Quad bike deaths dropping, but experts say more action required

NEW research shows there has been a small reduction in national quad bike deaths at work – including in South Australian agricultural communities – since new safety standards were introduced five years ago, but public health experts say more needs to be done to keep Australians safe on farms.

The research, published in the Australian and New Zealand Journal of Public Health, analysed quad bike-related deaths between 2001 and 2024 to provide a preliminary assessment of the impact of new safety standards introduced in 2020 and 2021. The Australian Consumer Goods (Quad Bike) Standard 2019, required all vehicles to meet a stability standard to reduce roll-overs, the fitting of an Operator Protector Device to reduce crush and asphyxiation injuries, and tags and labels featuring safety warnings.

The authors analysed 161 work-related quad bike deaths over 24 years (an average of 7 per year), 95 per cent of which occurred on farms, and 65 per cent involved roll-overs. Crush and asphyxiation injuries accounted for over 50 per cent of cases, with 25 per cent being head injuries. Overall, 74 per cent of workplace quad bike deaths were in Australians over 50.

The preliminary data shows that across the country the rolling four-year totals of work-related quad bike deaths peaked in 2016-17, but dropped in 2024 after new safety measures were introduced.

Lead author, Honorary Associate Professor Tony Lower, said while the national drop in work-related quad bike deaths “isn’t statistically significant, the initial findings are encouraging”.

“While only preliminary, this research is positive news. It supports the early



impacts of the Standard in improving stability and the benefits associated with fitting Operator Protector Devices. We will continue to monitor the data to provide robust assessment of the Standard,” Prof. Lower said.

Prof. Lower said the study also provides insights into what can be done to save more lives.

“To continue to keep Australians safe at work we need to ensure compliance with the Standard and extend these safety features to older quad bikes,” he said.

Public Health Association of Australia CEO, Adjunct Professor Terry Slevin, said “quad bikes are a useful tool on rural properties around Australia, they are also used for recreation but can be dangerous”.

“In addition to a number of deaths, around a thousand serious injuries a year result from quad bike use,” Prof. Slevin said.

“Measures to reduce this toll are welcome and appear to be helping, but more should be done. Enforcement and compliance are essential for the new standards to have a genuine effect.

“Kids under 16 should not be riding them, and older blokes in particular need to take close care when riding them.

“All states should look at their efforts to apply and enforce the Standards and ensure all quad bike users are aware of the dangers, and the rules. Engineering controls like Operator Protector Devices, essentially bars behind the seat to protect riders if they roll, must be mandatory.

“The best farm injury is the one that never happens. Most of these deaths and injuries are preventable and that can be achieved at very little cost.”

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SA Farmer

Australia's first DNA-based grapevine clonal identification service

IN a significant step for Australian viticulture, the Australian Wine Research Institute (AWRI) is preparing to launch a DNA-based grapevine clonal identification service, offering Riverland wine grape growers greater certainty and flexibility in the clonal identification process.

This is the first time such an advanced genomic analysis tool has been made available to the Australian wine industry, bringing greater accuracy and confidence to a task long reliant on visual assessments, anecdotal history, or paperwork.

"Clone misidentification can have long-term impacts on wine style, yield, and disease resistance, but it often can't be definitively determined until years after planting, if at all," AWRI research manager molecular biology Anthony Borneman said.

"With this new service, Australian growers, nurseries, and wine businesses



can prevent costly mistakes before they happen."

Developed by the AWRI with levy funding support through Wine Australia, the new service will be offered via the organisation's commercial arm, Affinity Labs. Wine businesses, vine improvement groups, and nurseries can submit vine tissue samples and receive a detailed report identifying the most likely clonal match, and a confidence rating for the result.

Dr Borneman said "whether you're planting, checking source material, or investigating why a vineyard isn't performing as expected – knowing your vine's clonal ID enables you to protect grapevine value, manage quality, and plan with confidence".

The service will initially support clonal identification for shiraz, cabernet sauvignon, chardonnay, and riesling, with further varieties to be added in future.

Who will benefit:

- ❑ Wine businesses sourcing or verifying planting material.
- ❑ Nurseries looking to back up clone claims.
- ❑ Growers investigating block variation or underperformance.
- ❑ Viticulturists and researchers validating trial blocks or heritage material.
- ❑ Vine improvement groups confirming the identity and integrity of propagation material in regional collections.

The AWRI is currently inviting expressions of interest from wine businesses and nurseries interested in trialling the service ahead of its full commercial release.

Further information can be found by visiting the website (awri.com.au/grapevine-clonal-identification-service/).



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AG NEWS

Support in a drought crisis

Mallee farmers discuss the potential benefits of early sowing wheat.
PHOTO: supplied



Sowing wheat early and deep in the Mallee – does variety matter?

EARLY sowing into deep subsoil moisture can give crops a significant head-start, especially in the challenging conditions of the Mallee.

Mallee Sustainable Farming recently explored the benefits of early and deep sowing with two wheat varieties, hammer (regular coleoptile) and calibre (longer coleoptile).

What happened?

Wheat was sown on three different dates – April 18, May 1, and May 16 – at about 10cm depth – approximately double the usual depth – to access stored moisture from summer rains. Results were promising:

- ❑ Early-sown wheat, on April 18 and May 1, emerged well on stored moisture within 10 days.
- ❑ Late-sown wheat, on May 16, emerged only after rain in June.
- ❑ Variety had minimal impact on emergence, as both hammer and calibre successfully established.

Despite very-dry winter conditions, early-sown wheat showed markedly better biomass and quicker development compared to the later-sown crops. Although final yields were similar across dates and varieties, at 1.2 to 1.4t/ha, early sowing showed clear agronomic benefits, like improved early growth and ground cover.

Farmer insights

Mallee farmer Nigel Baird was impressed by the results, noting early-

sown crops looked better all season.

He also noted the regular (shorter coleoptile) variety emerged well from depth, reducing concerns around coleoptile length.

The importance of summer weed control in conserving moisture for early sowing was another key takeaway.

Agronomist recommendations

Elders agronomist Peter Baird thinks early sowing is definitely worth considering when sub-surface moisture is available, noting the following advantages:

- ❑ Better early growth, biomass, and ground cover.
- ❑ Likely yield increases of up to 0.5t/ha.
- ❑ Reduced risk of crops ripening too late.

For deep sowing to work though, several conditions need to be met, such as good rotations, proactive summer weed control, low-weed pressures, adequate nutrition, suitable machinery, and timely farm operations.

There's also a need to manage frost risk by having a spread of crop types and sowing dates.

The trials reinforced that early deep sowing is definitely worth considering when there is sub-surface soil moisture in Mallee soils.

This work was supported by the Australian Government's Future Drought Fund.

WORDS

NICOLA CENTOFANTI

Opposition spokesperson for regional South Australia

DESPITE some recent rain events, the drought here in South Australia is far from over. This has been one of the most devastating droughts on record. The anxiety etched on the faces of our farmers tells the real story – one of financial strain, physical and emotional exhaustion, and a relentless fight to keep going.

Drought is not just a weather event, it is a human crisis. It doesn't only drain the land of moisture - it drains families of security, communities of confidence, and entire industries of stability. It hits the small towns where local shops, schools, and sporting clubs depend on the prosperity of surrounding farms. It affects the truck drivers, the shearers, the agronomists, and the countless small businesses that make up the regional supply chain. And ultimately, it affects every South Australian - because when farmers struggle, food prices rise, jobs are lost, and the state's economy suffers.

Our primary producers are the backbone of South Australia. They are the ones who put food on our tables, the clothes on our backs, and export dollars into our economy. They rise before dawn, work in searing heat and driving rain, and take business and financial risks most city dwellers can barely imagine - all to ensure that our state and our nation can eat and thrive. They do it without fuss, without complaint, and far too often, without the recognition they deserve. They embody hard work.

After several years of poor market conditions, it's not just farmers who are facing tough conditions. South Australia's wine grape growers are under immense strain, with low prices, oversupply, and shrinking export opportunities eroding their viability. On top of this, drought adds yet another heavy blow - stressing vines, slashing yields, and forcing heartbreaking decisions about whether to irrigate, cut back production, or pull out plantings vineyards altogether. For many, it feels like wave after wave of challenges with little reprieve, and the risk is that years of skill, investment, and regional heritage could be lost. Drought in this context is not just another hurdle - it's a compounding pressure that threatens the very survival of an industry central to our state's economy and identity.

For months, as an Opposition and as a united regional community, we have been calling for targeted, practical, on-the-ground drought relief. We have asked for measures that would make an immediate difference to struggling farmers and small businesses - initiatives like water for fodder programs, rebates on Emergency Services Levies and other government charges, freight rebates, and no-and-low-interest concessional loans to keep families afloat. We have urged the Government to engage directly with local

councils, industry groups, and community leaders on the ground, to tailor assistance packages that meet the real needs rather than ticking boxes on forms in an office in Adelaide.

We have also called for the Government to support our Drought Response and Recovery Bill - a structured framework for response, and recovery, requiring Government to declare a drought, and act on expert advice, cut through red tape, and deliver on-the-ground assistance that reflects the real needs of affected areas. The Bill also creates a Drought Fund, legally protected from being spent on administration, ensuring every dollar goes directly to practical drought support like freight subsidies, no-and-low-interest concessional loans and other recovery initiatives for farmers and regional communities. That's because we understand that the future of our food and fibre production is worth investing in during hard times. This is not a radical idea; it is common sense.

And yet, time and again, these calls have gone unanswered. I have spoken to countless farmers who have applied for assistance, only to be told they did not qualify because they failed to meet a technical or bureaucratic definition of "affected." This is about people's lives, their homes, and the security of our state's food supply. When a government does not listen, does not adapt, and does not deliver practical support where it is most needed, it risks sending the wrong message to the very people who feed and clothe us all. Already, farmers are being forced into heartbreaking decisions – destocking herds rich in the genetics bred over generations, bulldozing blocks their families planted, and selling vital equipment they can no longer afford to keep. Once those assets are gone, they cannot be easily replaced. Recovery will take years, and every day of delay increases the risk of permanent loss.

I want to say directly to our farmers, growers, fishers, and regional businesses: we see you, we hear you, and we will keep fighting for you. We will continue to stand shoulder-to-shoulder with you, not just in the good seasons, but in the hardest of times.

Your work underpins the economy and very social fabric of South Australia. Without you, our supermarket shelves would be bare, our export income would collapse, and our rural towns would fade into history. You are more than just an industry - you are a way of life worth defending.

South Australia's strength has always come from its people - and in particular, from the determination of those in the regions. In times of crisis, we do not turn our backs on each other; we stand together. That is the kind of leadership the bush needs now. That is the kind of leadership I will continue to fight for.

Our farmers deserve a government that values their contribution, understands their challenges, and acts decisively to support them in their time of need. Anything less is not just a failure of policy - it is a failure of basic decency.

The Barossa's purple patch

WORDS & PHOTOGRAPHY
BEVAN JONES

IN a region that is world renowned for its wines and culinary delights, there is a little hidden gem tucked into the gentle foothills of the Barossa Valley.

The Lyndoch Lavender Farm and Café is a multi-award-winning tourist attraction that has been entertaining visitors for more than three decades with its vibrant fields, warm hospitality and artisanal products.

The family-run destination offers an escape into a world of colour, fragrance and culinary charm, and is a must visit for a lavender enthusiast.

It also happens to be the largest-working lavender farm in SA and whether you're looking for something unique, or simply seeking a peaceful retreat, this Barossa Valley gem is a destination worth exploring.

Being a family owned and operated business they also provide visitors with a great opportunity to visit a working lavender farm, where guests are able to purchase specialty goods in beautiful rural surroundings.



Mat Allanson invites locals and visitors seeking a unique Barossa Valley experience to the Lyndoch Lavender Farm and Café.

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Lyndoch Lavender Farm and Café manager Mat Allanson said the business was great for families and complimented the wine experience of the Barossa Valley in a relaxed environment.

“Being in the Barossa is a big advantage tourism-wise and we are very fortunate that we get lots of people coming here, in particularly during our peak times between September and December,” he said.

“The Barossa Valley is very beautiful, and it is something different where people can relax at their own pace, and enjoy and have a look around.

“There is also a lack of things to do in the Barossa that are family focused other than the odd playground here and there... so that is another advantage that we have.

“It is also a pretty special location within the Barossa that has a good range of things, and hopefully with a five-star resort to be built in the next few years about 400m away, it will be good for business and hopefully still good to live here.

“We will see what happens there and see if it is a good thing for this end of the valley.”

The business was started in 1991 by Mat’s parents, Evan and Jill Allanson, in the same year that the first plants were put in the ground.

The shop was opened in 1994 and the business was taken over by Mat, and wife Leslie, in 2005 after they moved to SA from NSW, in 2000.

Mat said that customer service was one of the reasons behind them being a multi-award-winning company.

“We are really focused on providing a positive and memorable experience for our customers and so the way that we approach this is really important and we ensure that we are also employing quality staff that have a focus on providing outstanding customer service,” he said.

“We go out of our way to treat people well and that is our number-one priority, and we make sure that we can do that to the best of our ability.

“You’re not always going to please everyone, but we do what we can to provide them with a great experience and hopefully they will tell their friends and family to come and visit as well.”

Mat said the business had continued to grow, particularly since the café was opened in 2008.

“The business has continued to get bigger and better and in particular during the peak time from September to December when we are open every day, this is a great time as it is flower time and there are people everywhere, and lots of international visitors,” he said.

“There are opportunities for largely self-guided tours which gives people the opportunity to have a look around, whether that be small groups, or couples, there’s a whole heap of options for groups and there’s no rush, people can wander around in their own time.

“There is always something in flower and there’s an always an opportunity to look at different types of lavenders.

“Thankfully the council sealed the road four or five years ago and it’s also allowed better access previously we had dirt roads that created dust clouds, which was horrible, so that’s definitely been a bonus.

“We were lucky as well that Covid-19 didn’t affect us too much, we closed during a quiet time of year and this allowed us to upgrade a few things and we got new carpet, air-conditioning, furniture and fittings so that wasn’t a terrible thing.”

Mat said while the drought had been a challenge they were more fortunate than others.

“We are very lucky as almost everything is on drip irrigation, we are still watering more often than previously, but fortunately lavenders don’t need anywhere near as much water as vineyards,” he said.

“Things are very dry and we are going to have some losses of plants but we are managing that pretty well.”

Mat said he loved meeting people from all over the world, and was proud to see the business improve and continue to thrive.

Lyndoch Lavender Farm and Café spans more than 2.5ha and showcases more than 60 varieties of lavender, which creates a patchwork of purples and greens that shift with the season.

The farm’s gentle slopes and open spaces make it the perfect spot for a leisurely stroll or a quiet moment of reflection.

Visitors can wander through the

rows, breathing in the calming scent and occasionally spotting local birdlife among the blooms.

The Lavender Kitchen café crafts a menu inspired by a delicate essence of lavender, this features lavender-infused ice cream, to subtly flavored toasties and apple strudel, with offerings providing a unique twist on classic favourites.

For those less adventurous, the café also offers a selection of non-lavender dishes, ensuring there’s something for every palate.

For a deeper dive into the world of lavender, the farm offers guided tours that explore the cultivation, uses, and distillation of this versatile plant.

These informative walks provide insights into the farm’s operations and the myriad ways lavender can be utilised, from essential oils to culinary applications.

The on-site gift shop is also a must visit and there is a magical variety of lavender-inspired products where visitors can browse a range of items including natural toiletries, household products, and gourmet foods, all crafted with the farm’s own lavender. These products offer a way to bring a piece of the farm’s tranquility into one’s own home.

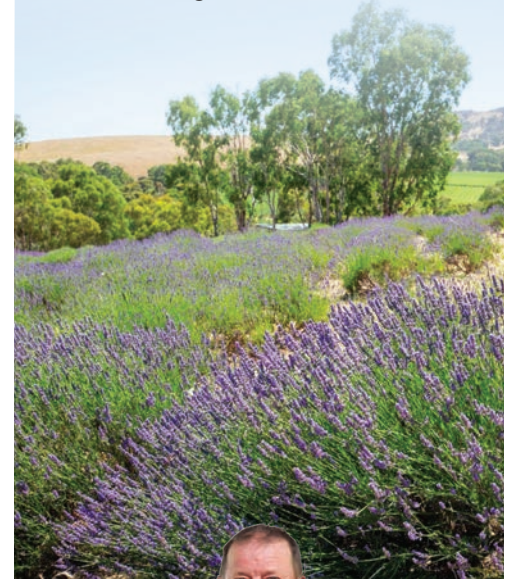
The shop and farm are open seven days a week, from 10am to 4.30pm, while the café is only open on weekends from January to August from 10am to 4pm.

It’s worth noting that the café may have seasonal closures, so it’s advisable to check ahead before planning your visit.

To find out more visit the website (www.lyndochlavenderfarm.com.au/).

The Lyndoch Lavender Farm and Café offers:

- An impressive range of beautiful lavender products available through their shop and online by mail order.
- A special place to visit with friends, family, by yourself, or with a group.
- The opportunity to savor the tasting delights on offer through The Lavender Kitchen.
- An opportunity to wander through their colourful lavender landscape.
- Local birds and animal life to admire.
- The chance to relax, recharge and be inspired by their views and surroundings.



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TRINITY COLLEGE

Paschke's frontline farming battle

WORDS & PHOTOGRAPHY SEBASTIAN CALDERON

STORY ON PAGE 22



Like many across SA, Holder-based farmer Tim Paschke has struggled with ongoing drought conditions through 2025.

A LOCAL grain and livestock producer from the Riverland is facing one of the toughest seasons of his farming career, as persistent drought and unprecedented wind conditions continue to wreak havoc on his property.

Tim Paschke, who farms across approximately 14,000 acres, has spoken about the emotional, financial and environmental toll the extreme conditions have taken.

Despite years of preparation, adaptive management, and best-practice farming, Mr Paschke says the current drought has pushed his operation, and his community, to the brink of closing down.

“We sewed up to 14,000 acres before the rain,” he said.

“But accompanied with the lack of rainfall last year and the previous year before that, our stubble cover has obviously diminished.”

This lack of ground cover has left paddocks exposed to severe wind erosion, causing significant soil movement and reducing the already strained productivity of his land.

“Our soils are light and fragile, and the extreme wind is just grabbing the sand and blowing it through fences, pulverising any bit of stubble cover we had remaining.”

Even with low-disturbance sowing techniques and careful stubble management, the conditions have overwhelmed traditional safeguards.

Livestock management under pressure

While the cropping outlook remains grim, Mr Paschke is unsure whether he will harvest a single grain this year and is concerned about his livestock operation, which has also been heavily impacted.

“We’ve been feeding all our sheep since March and we’ve got all our lambs enclosed in feedlots,” Mr Paschke said.

“In July, you would have thought we’d have some green feed, but we haven’t, so we’ve had to hand-feed them for a while now, but we are uncertain about what is coming.

“If it doesn’t rain within eight weeks, I may be forced to sell my sheep.

“I can’t afford to buy feed for another 12 months. That’s not good for my mental health, and it’s not good for my bank balance.

“There are some paddocks we can’t run stock on now probably for eighteen months.”

Strategies and sustainability

Despite the circumstances, Mr Paschke remains pragmatic about his approach, drawing from lessons learned in previous seasons.

“Looking after our stock is important and confinement feeding and early management of taking them off paddocks and feed-lotting the lambs — that’s been a really good way to keep them healthy,” Mr Paschke said.

However, Mr Paschke said that on the cropping front, all best-practice strategies have been exhausted.

“We implement all those things every year, rotations, stubble cover, weed control, but unless it rains, they don’t mean a lot.

“I try to remain flexible with the seeding program, removing canola, lentils and peas, which can be expensive to maintain without rain.

“We’ve still got bins of lupins and vetch, and we are making decisions based around that. We sowed paddocks to try to get cover, and that turned out to be the worst thing we could have done.”

Government support and gaps

When it comes to drought assistance, Paschke acknowledges the limited support he’s received so far, namely infrastructure grants, but said these often favour farmers who already have funds available.

“The problem is you’ve actually got to have money to get the money,” Mr Paschke said.

Mr Paschke believes earlier and more accessible programs, like those rolled out during the 2000s drought, could make a meaningful difference.

“Zero interest loans helped us back in the 2000s... farming is a very expensive business. We understand the risk, but this is unprecedented,” Mr Paschke said.

“Floods take everything overnight, but droughts take it over time. At the end, we’re in the same boat, no feed, no income.”

Mr Paschke is also concerned about the broader



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“Our soils are light and fragile, and the extreme wind is just grabbing the sand and blowing it through fences, pulverising any bit of stubble cover we had remaining.”

community impact.

“It’s not just farmers that suffer. Mechanics, tyre shops, pubs, every business in our local town is connected to agriculture,” Mr Paschke said.

“I recall a past grant scheme where local spending was encouraged through store credits.

“You’d get \$1500 at the butcher or grocery store. That helped the whole community, not just the farmer.”

Mental health and workforce challenges

Another consequence of the slow response to the drought is a lack of mental health services.

“The State Government put quite a lot of money into mental health, but it needed to happen three years ago. The wait time can be up to two or three months for any assistance,” Mr Paschke said.

“Guys who are looking for help are not getting it when they need it, and they might need help next week, not in two months.”

Looking forward: resilience and recovery

Despite the hardships, Mr Paschke is still planning for recovery.

“In terms of cropping, we’re in recovery mode now and we need to be careful with how we treat those paddocks next year,” Mr Paschke said.

“On the sheep side, we’ve got the best setup, but hand-feeding since March takes its toll. We’ve done what we can, and even brought in almond shell to stretch the hay.”

Even with the best planning, he admits the weather has the final say.

“Someone asked why we weren’t ready for drought,” Mr Paschke said.

“The truth is, we were. We bought a heap of straw

in 2022, but we had a mice plague, so it’s always something.”

Call for regionalised drought response

Mr Paschke believes future drought policy should be more targeted.

“In the 2008 drought, council regions were put into drought declarations,” Mr Paschke said

“That allowed for earlier funding, and I wonder if we need to look at that again.

“We are not asking for handouts, but options like low-interest loans could help us buy the inputs for the next crop.

“That could make the difference between being here in two years or not.”

A farmer’s reality

The Paschke family, like many in the Riverland, are weathering another difficult season. But Mr Paschke is clear-eyed about the scale of the challenge.

“This is our third year of low income, and at the moment, it could be eighteen months before I see a harvest,” Mr Paschke said.

“We know the risks, but the speed of the response, whether it’s mental health, infrastructure support, or financial aid, has to improve, because once the rain does come, we’ll still be here, rebuilding.”

In Holder, as in many parts of South Australia, the battle with drought continues — not only in the soil, but in the decisions, resilience, and hope of farmers like Tim Paschke.



Mr Paschke says the tough drought conditions have taken both economic and mental health tolls on primary producers.

Former owners of the abattoir at Loxton, Chris and Michele Schwartz, with Riverland butcher Nigel Rollbusch, who officially took over the meat processing facility in July.
PHOTO: MBL News



Riverland abattoir remains in local hands

WORDS CHRISTINE WEBSTER

WELL known Riverland butcher Nigel Rollbusch has demonstrated his passion and commitment to the region's livestock and meat industry by purchasing the Loxton Abattoir.

The abattoir will be known as the 'Riverland Abattoir' and was previously owned by Chris and Michele Schwarz who operated it for 37 years.

It is the only certified meat processing facility within the Riverland

and Mallee area and was on the market for some time.

Mr Rollbusch said his purchase of the abattoir in July would value add to his Waikerie and Barmera-based operations.

He has employed three slaughtermen/butchers, two are from Loxton and one from Barmera.

The owner of Rollbusch Quality Meats said he could not resist the

opportunity to purchase the abattoir and ensure that it remained in local hands.

"I did not want to see it go to outside investors who may have not allowed local butchers to source local livestock and kill them here," he said.

Mr Rollbusch already used the abattoir before he purchased it to slaughter lamb and beef for his business and is committed to using

local livestock.

"The quality we obtain from this area is unbelievable," he said.

"We just can't get this anywhere else, which is why I did not want the abattoir to shut."

Mr Rollbusch has strong ties to the Schwarz family who employed him as an apprentice butcher at Hygienic Meats at Loxton and at the abattoir they previously owned during the late 1990s.

He is excited about the facilities on offer at the abattoir, which he will continue to use to prepare locally sourced pork for the small goods that he makes at his wholesale production store at Barmera.

Mr Rollbusch said the Schwarzs upgraded the abattoir about 20 years ago.

"It has slaughtering facilities, and a separate boning room, which is amazing because we can make sausages and burgers there," Mr Rollbusch said.



The Loxton Abattoir is now known as the 'Riverland Abattoir' and is ideally located close to livestock producers. PHOTO: MBL News



The quality we obtain from this area is unbelievable.

"The whole abattoir is of a very high standard, and we can store up to 200 lamb carcasses and about 25 beef carcasses," he said.

"We also have the facilities to kill pigs."

Mr Rollbusch said owning the abattoir will enable him to bone meat at Loxton instead of at his Waikerie processing plant in McCoy Street, which he will use for mainly storing carcasses.

He also has a gourmet butcher's shop next to Woolworths in Waikerie.

Mr Rollbusch said the abattoir is already used by Hygienic Meats, at Loxton, and the Berri North Meat Store and hopefully other local butchers would start using the facility.

"There is plenty of potential here, we are not far from Adelaide and butchers from Mildura are interested also in using the abattoir as well," he said.

Mr Rollbusch said the close proximity of the abattoir to livestock producers based only about 30km away also ensured the meat would be high quality.

"The less stress on animals the better the quality of product," he said.



The Riverland Abattoir's facilities includes a separate boning room and sausages and burgers can be made on the premises.

Less Stress, Better Meat

Why does it matter that the Riverland Abattoir is only 30km from most local producers?

Because shorter travel = lower stress for animals. And that's not just good for the animals—it's good for the meat, too.

Stress before slaughter can cause a condition called DFD (Dark, Firm, Dry) meat, which affects tenderness and taste, especially in beef.

Keeping animals close to home means:

- Less time in transit
- Familiar surroundings
- Better control over handling
- Improved meat quality and shelf life

As Nigel says:

"The less stress on animals, the better the quality of product."

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Riverland & Regional SA



Three families united for Tribus dream

WORDS BEVAN JONES

IN a region known for world-class wine, there is an emerging boutique producer in the Barossa Valley who is dedicated to crafting an exceptional product.

Tribus Wines was born out of a desire to craft wines honouring tradition while forging new pathways, with three families united by passion, purpose and a shared love of producing wine.

Derived from the Latin word for “tribe”, Tribus have a clear focus on creating a wine label that is rooted in community, hands-on methods and a deep respect for the land.

It reflects the brand’s philosophy of coming together as a tribe to hunt and gather the best fruit from around the country, and winemaker Paul Thomas said it also related to the fact the three business owners all had young children running around.

“Dan Fitzgerald and I worked together years ago in software development, and Chris Gray I worked with in Coonawarra, and we have been mates for a long time and bring different skills to the business,” Mr Thomas said.

“Dan naturally takes care of the software development for the business, and Chris looks after

the freight and logistics, as that relates to his current full-time work in the wine and spirits industry.

“It is a passion project at the moment but it is almost starting to get too big, which is exciting and it is great to do it with two great mates.

“It was hard to come up with a name and we were throwing ideas around, and we all have got young families and all our own little tribes, with Dan having three kids, and myself and Chris having two each.

“With Tribus being Latin for tribe, we thought it was a good name to call it.

“The brand was born from the bond of three families that love a hands-on approach, deep respect for tradition, and a love for sharing exceptional wine.”

The foundation of Tribus Wines lies in its fruit, much of which is sourced from one of Australia’s most-renowned growers, the Hoffmann family’s Dimchurch Vineyards, in Ebenezer.

The Hoffmann family are known for producing premium grapes that form the base of many legendary Barossa reds.

Tribus gets all their fruit from vineyards that are certified sustainable and are quite minimal in their approach to chemicals in the vineyard and the winery.

Tribus also sources select parcels from Eden Valley and Clare Valley, adding diversity and complexity to their small-batch range.

Mr Thomas is the financial controller for the Hoffmann family, and has completed a degree in finance and accounting to go with it.

He brings a wealth of experience in producing award-winning Barossa Valley reds, and Tribus were recently named a finalist in the prestigious 2025 Young of Gun of Wine awards.



Tribus Wines winemaker Paul Thomas is dedicated to honouring Barossa Valley tradition while forging unique paths. PHOTO: Bevan Jones



Mr Thomas said it was an incredible honour.

"To be nominated for such a prestigious award was pretty amazing, and for us it's a really big thing," he said.

"Doing what we do it can get you down a bit at times, but to get our name out there and know that people love our wine when it's in front of them is fantastic and very rewarding.

"It is really difficult to stand out in the Barossa as it is so competitive, and so going along to these events and mingling with our peers in the industry is very important.

"Adrian Hoffmann has been a huge help and we are very grateful to him for all he has done for us."

Tribus approach every vintage with care and ensure they time the harvest for peak ripeness and character.

Traditional basket pressing is also a cornerstone of the Tribus process, contributing to a softer, rounder texture that showcases the natural quality of the fruit.

Every basket-pressed red and small-batch blend tells stories of the land, the vintage, and the people behind every bottle.

Mr Thomas said he had worked with different types of pressing, and he found basket pressing to be a softer, and more traditional way of making wine.

He said when producing the wine, they wanted to have that Barossa tradition but with a point of difference, and wanted to ensure they avoided being seen as "boring".

Like several winemakers, Mr Thomas said a recent lack of rainfall had made it tough.

"Water can be so expensive and the dry conditions in recent years has made it really challenging, we really have been chasing our tails," he said.

"Any rain at the moment is a huge help as our yields are down on last year and how much water in your soil profile has a lot to do with it.

"If you get a 20mm rain event that is gold to us, five of those in a month is amazing, but we just don't get it and we need so much more to see us through to another vintage, it is really bad at the moment."

Mr Thomas said making a solid Barossa shiraz was

all about where the fruit came from.

"By getting our shiraz from the Hoffmann's, we can go around with him and see what we want from the vineyards and there are different soils and climates and so much to choose from, so we are very fortunate," he said.

"Where you get the fruit from is so important as well, and Adrian has fruit from the early 1900s in the ground which is really cool and every now and then we get a piece of that which is amazing."

As a winery, Tribus are planning to build on their Barossa origins in the future by finding the best grapes from other wine regions to offer new, exciting and more quintessential varieties to their incredible customers.

Tribus Wines is more than just a producer, it is the pursuit of excellence in every bottle.

Restaurants and pubs are starting to take their products and you can also find out more about Tribus and purchase their wine online by visiting the website (www.tribuswines.com/).



The brand was born from the bond of three families that love a hands-on approach, deep respect for tradition, and a love for sharing exceptional wine.

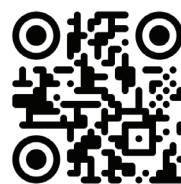


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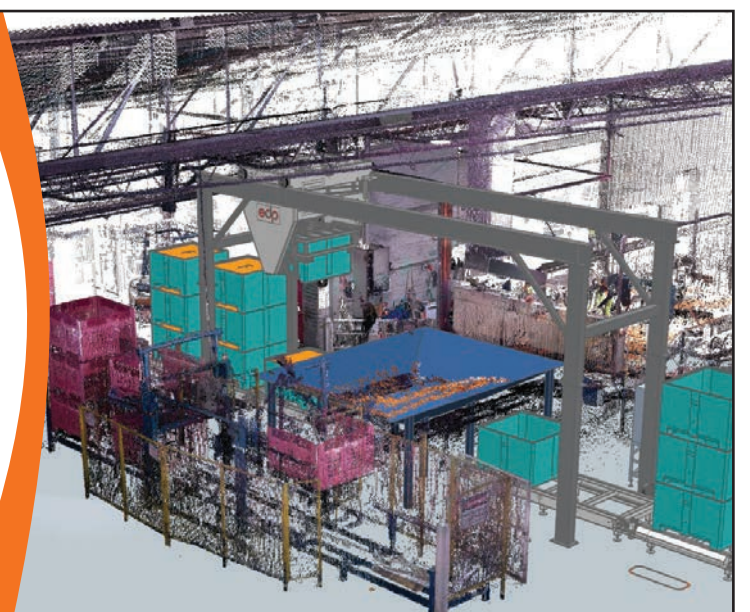
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Septimus highlighting the Barossa's best

WORDS BEVAN JONES

INFLUENCES from the Barossa Valley – including from a well-known industry figure and the emerging Tribus winery – are inspiring a new venue in Adelaide.

Septimus House of Cheese and Wine is a French-inspired experience developing a city cellar door for regional wine brands, including from the world-renowned Barossa Valley, and providing them with the opportunity to build their business and brand outside of the region.

Septimus owner Ian Coker has developed the experience in the heart of Adelaide, highlighting a range of new and iconic wineries in the venue.

The new wine bar, which opened in March 2025, has partnered with local emerging wine brand Tribus Wines to bring the Barossa label to the city.

Mr Coker moved to Adelaide 11 years ago, originally for business, and said he would visit wineries and get bombarded with different terms, so he decided to learn more about wine. This began the idea that developed into Septimus.

This marked the engineer's first step into hospitality, backed by formal wine training, strong roots in Adelaide's visual art scene and passion for the project.

Septimus fuses numerous influences into one – and Mr Coker has invested 10 years into making his dream a reality.

Previously residing in Melbourne, Mr Coker said he saw potential with Septimus, and Adelaide, which led to him taking the plunge to buy the property.

"There was an opportunity to buy this property in Adelaide, and I could see that Adelaide could be the same as

Melbourne in the 1990s, and 2000s," he said.

"I could visualise it as an atmospheric property where people wanted to get out, drink beautiful wine, eat delicious cheese and engage in conversations.

"The tattoo studio business owners were not continuing the lease, so I saw this as the perfect opportunity to turn it from the studio into a wine and cheese bar.

"I spent 18 hours a day in the middle of summer for three months swinging hammers and doing renovations, and with my Dad having a passion in restoring houses, I developed the same passion and enjoyed doing renovations and design as an engineer.

"This city cellar door concept is something that I have been working on for quite some time.

"I have always been passionate about wine brands that are well known but I am particularly passionate about those that are emerging. I see this concept as being an incredible resource for brands that are new and or starting out.

"We hope that by offering a space where a wine brand can grow and develop, so can their business. We want to give businesses an opportunity and be a part of nurturing a new collection of wine makers and wine brands, giving them a platform and venue to display and sell their wines from.

"I have worked closely with a range of wineries at a local and international level, and it is a privilege to celebrate and unite them under one roof at Septimus."

Mr Coker said he was aiming to remove the snobby reputation around drinking wine.

"The dream of this venue has been



10 years in the making, and this is just one exciting instalment for the venue," he said.

"Whether you are stopping by for a quick drink or settling in for one of our experiences, we promise that Septimus is equal parts sophisticated and welcoming.

"I am on a mission to strip away the snobbery around wine, arming my staff with a rich knowledge of varieties, flavours, and regions so they can pass it on to customers with confidence."

Mr Coker said that the Barossa Valley was special to him.

"Barossa is the premium benchmark of regional wine in Australia and the most revered wine region in the country, and of course SA is one of the wine capitals of the world," he said.

"When they think Australian wine, it is the Barossa, and its shiraz.

"I have built some phenomenal relationships with winemakers and growers from the Barossa; they are so welcoming and giving.

"You have people like Adrian Hoffman, who is one of the most revered names in wine making and growing, and he is so humble.

"He just loves what he does, and they want to connect people together





and the most important drink which is wine.

"I have also got to know the three guys from Tribus, and they are resilient as anything and lovely people and dedicated to their craft, and to see them nominated for Young Gun of the Year was extremely exciting.

"I am proud to already stock and sell their wines at Septimus."

Mr Coker said the name Septimus was quite iconic.

"Septimus means 'seventh born', which ties in perfectly with our rotating menu of seven cheeses paired with seven wines—from sparkling to whites and reds," he said.

"It was a pretty iconic name which sticks out in your mind and visually it was nice, there's no other brands out there with that name."

Mr Coker said Septimus had seating available across two levels, and will cater for up to 50 patrons.

The venue has been thoughtfully restored, preserving the building's character while adding a contemporary touch as it is located on the outskirts of the historic Adelaide Fruit and Produce Exchange.

Septimus has a carefully curated wine list and a standout seven cheese

and wine pairing as its signature experience.

Mr Coker said cheese and wine was the perfect combination.

"Our venue is a celebration of culture right from the curated vintages appearing on our wine and cheese list all the way through to our collection of art and music," he said.

"This is the start of an exciting hospitality journey for our team and it combines our love for all local wine with our passion for French vintages and cheeses.

"Wine and cheese are the perfect pairing and we don't have a kitchen as it is a lot of work and hard work to make profit, plus labour costs would go through the roof.

"Cheese is one of the best foods to pair with wine as wine is terrible for your teeth but cheese is protective for your teeth.

"When I have a wine, I love food and so we have beautiful fresh imported cheese and high quality local and imported meats which is perfect and easy accompaniment to wine pairing."

Septimus is located at 220 Grenfell Street, Adelaide and open from Wednesday to Sunday 11am to 12am. For further information visit the website (www.septimus.au/).



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Price increases, but still challenges in 2025 vintage



RIVERLAND

THE 2025 Riverland vintage was very early compared to previous years, starting as early as the second week in January. This was due to weather conditions producing a mild winter and hotter-than-average spring.

During harvest, higher-than-average evening temperatures also posed a risk to grape quality, and continual irrigation to prevent the degrading of fruit was essential.

The 2025 season saw the Riverland wine-growing region hit hard by a few damaging weather events, from very early in the growing season. Frost saw some of our local vineyards decimated, and others still impacted.

The region had anywhere between a 50 to 80 per cent reduction in yields on particular blocks, with the loss of shoots especially affecting the top wire. This resulted in growers making decisions earlier based on crop returns for the season, with many deciding to not produce a 2025 vintage.

White grapes were damaged more extensively than red varieties, due to the timing of the frost. This led to some wineries being unable to meet their fruit requirements, with some reporting up to 20 per cent under their estimated supply. This did lead to a small increase in prices offered to growers.

The Riverland continued post-harvest to receive little-to-no rain, with a longer and hotter summer into autumn.

Growers have irrigated for much longer this season, and we have seen temporary lease prices for water dramatically increase.

Even with these severe weather conditions, the harvest of shiraz especially is surplus to demand.

White varieties were under production targets for vintage 2025, with the frost being the main contributing factor to why the supply requirements were unable to be met.

CONTINUED PG32

Winegrape intake summary table – reds								
Varieties	Tonnes purchased	Total value purchased	Average purchase value per tonne	Change in price year on year	Winery grown fruit (tonnes)	Winery grown share of crush	Total crushed (tonnes)	Estimated total value all grapes
Red								
Barbera	5						5	\$945
Cabernet Franc	6						6	\$1,168
Cabernet Sauvignon	51,702	\$11,907,311	\$230	22%	15,595	23%	67,298	\$15,498,879
Durif	1,319	\$434,597	\$330	-9%	0	0%	1,319	\$434,636
Graciano	15						15	\$5,341
Grenache	4,438	\$1,824,814	\$411	-7%	127	3%	4,565	\$1,876,825
Lagrein	19	\$11,047	\$601	0%			19	\$11,047
Malbec	176				381	68%	557	\$184,788
Mataro/Mourvedre	2,158	\$779,218	\$361	-8%	91	4%	2,249	\$812,038
Merlot	16,367	\$3,645,483	\$223	22%	10,063	38%	26,429	\$5,886,806
Montepulciano	218	\$121,038	\$554	2%	58	21%	277	\$153,392
Muscat à Petits Grains								
Rouges	99	\$34,419	\$347	0%			99	\$34,419
Nebbiolo	1						1	\$105
Nero d'Avola	36						36	\$32,634
Petit Verdot	4,313	\$834,104	\$193	8%	3,869	47%	8,182	\$1,582,349
Pinot Meunier	1						1	\$150
Pinot Noir	7,665	\$4,908,569	\$640	-1%	747	9%	8,412	\$5,370,571
Ruby Cabernet	953	\$218,035	\$229	-22%	589	38%	1,541	\$352,783
Sangiovese	223	\$61,021	\$274	0%	516	70%	739	\$202,069
Shiraz	79,961	\$16,308,431	\$204	2%	22,449	22%	102,411	\$20,886,987
Tempranillo	960	\$286,894	\$299	-13%	315	25%	1,275	\$381,093
Touriga Nacional	40	\$14,225	\$359	0%	80	67%	120	\$43,099
Other red	2,997	\$1,305,319	\$435	9%	10,863	78%	13,860	\$5,019,719
Red Total	173,672	\$42,793,345	\$246	4%	65,743	27%	239,415	\$58,771,845

Note: Where there are fewer than three purchasers of a variety, the average price and total value are not reported to protect confidentiality.

Winegrape intake summary table – whites								
Varieties	Tonnes purchased	Total value purchased	Average purchase value per tonne	Change in price year on year	Winery grown fruit (tonnes)	Winery grown share of crush	Total crushed (tonnes)	Estimated total value all grapes
White								
Chardonnay	65,723	\$26,703,201	\$406	11%	8,810	12%	74,533	\$30,315,147
Chenin Blanc	1,018	\$338,877	\$333	1%			1,018	\$338,877
Colombard	15,461	\$4,241,594	\$274	-2%	2,275	13%	17,736	\$4,865,773
Fiano	186	\$81,522	\$439	0%	87	32%	273	\$119,688
Gewürztraminer	716				830	54%	1,546	\$580,971
Grüner Veltliner					85	100%	85	\$85,140
Muscat à Petits Grains Blancs	641	\$218,807	\$341	6%	337	34%	978	\$333,767
Muscat Gordo Blanco	15,722	\$4,893,417	\$311	4%	2,176	12%	17,899	\$5,570,766
Pinot Gris/Grigio	6,695	\$3,804,460	\$568	8%	1,835	22%	8,530	\$4,847,277
Prosecco	815	\$503,850	\$618	9%			815	\$503,850
Riesling	1,129	\$370,538	\$328	4%	275	20%	1,404	\$460,866
Roussanne	16						16	\$9,251
Sauvignon Blanc	20,188	\$11,049,018	\$547	1%	3,603	15%	23,792	\$13,020,937
Semillon	3,776	\$1,290,336	\$342	1%	3,542	48%	7,319	\$2,500,574
Verdelho	871	\$258,046	\$296	-0%	783	47%	1,654	\$490,053
Vermentino	392	\$190,856	\$487	-9%	212	35%	604	\$294,190
Viognier	1,133	\$563,004	\$497	2%	308	21%	1,441	\$716,247
Other white	2,250	\$722,486	\$321	-3%	152	6%	2,402	\$873,767
White Total	136,733	\$55,508,373	\$406	10%	25,311	16%	162,044	\$65,927,142
Grand Total	310,405	\$98,301,718	\$317	1%	91,054	23%	401,459	\$124,698,986

RIVERLAND



Price dispersion – purchased grapes (red)

	Tonnes purchased in each segment				
Varieties	<\$600	\$600-<\$900	\$900-<\$1500	\$1500-<\$2000	Total purchased
Red					
Barbera	5				5
Cabernet Franc	6				6
Cabernet Sauvignon	51,562	141			51,702
Durif	1,228	91			1,319
Graciano	15				15
Grenache	4,428		10		4,438
Lagrein	15		4		19
Malbec	176				176
Mataro/Mourvedre	1,879	279			2,158
Merlot	16,367				16,367
Montepulciano	133	49	37		218
Muscat à Petits Grains Rouges	99				99
Nebbiolo	1				1
Nero d'Avola			36		36
Petit Verdot	4,313				4,313
Pinot Meunier	1				1
Pinot Noir	959	6,673	33		7,665
Ruby Cabernet	953				953
Sangiovese	223				223
Shiraz	78,766	1,071	124		79,961
Tempranillo	936		24		960
Touriga Nacional	33	7			40
Other red	2,598	373	24	2	2,997
Red Total	164,694	8,684	292	2	173,672

Price dispersion – purchased grapes (white)

	Tonnes purchased in each segment				
Varieties	<\$600	\$600-<\$900	\$900-<\$1500	\$1500-<\$2000	Total purchased
White					
Chardonnay	64,970	724	29		65,723
Chenin Blanc	1,018				1,018
Colombard	15,461				15,461
Fiano	178		7		186
Gewürztraminer	716				716
Muscat à Petits Grains Blancs	641				641
Muscat Gordo Blanco	15,718	5			15,722
Pinot Gris/Grigio	3,611	3,084			6,695
Prosecco	592	219	4		815
Riesling	1,129				1,129
Roussanne	7	9			16
Sauvignon Blanc	16,957	3,231			20,188
Semillon	3,640	136			3,776
Verdelho	871				871
Vermentino	302	86	4		392
Viognier	915		218		1,133
Other white	2,218		32		2,250
White Total	128,944	7,494	294		136,733
Total purchased	293,638	16,178	587	2	310,405

Overview of vintage statistics

After recording the smallest crush in over a decade in 2024, at 391,248 tonnes, even below the 2013 crush of 396,199 tonnes, the Riverland saw a slight increase of 3 per cent, to 401,459 tonnes, in 2025.

Over the past five years (up to 2024), the average crush for the Riverland has been 465,708 tonnes, making this year's crush 14 per cent below the average.

There were 47 respondents to the survey who reported crushing grapes from the Riverland in 2025, the same number as in 2024.

The total value of wine grapes in 2025 was \$125m, compared with \$119m in 2024, an increase of 5 per cent. The overall average value increased by 1 per cent, from \$312 in 2024, to \$317/tonne.

All major varieties increased in average value. Cabernet sauvignon and merlot both increased by 22 per cent, to \$230/tonne and \$223/tonne, respectively, while shiraz was up 2 per cent, to \$204/tonne.

This resulted in the average value of cabernet sauvignon and merlot being higher than shiraz for the first time since 2016.

Chardonnay was up 11 per cent, to \$406/tonne, sauvignon blanc was up 1 per cent, to \$547/tonne, while pinot gris/grigio was up 8 per cent, to \$568/tonne.

The price dispersion showed an upward shift, with 22 per cent of grapes purchased below \$200/tonne, compared with 32 per cent in 2024.

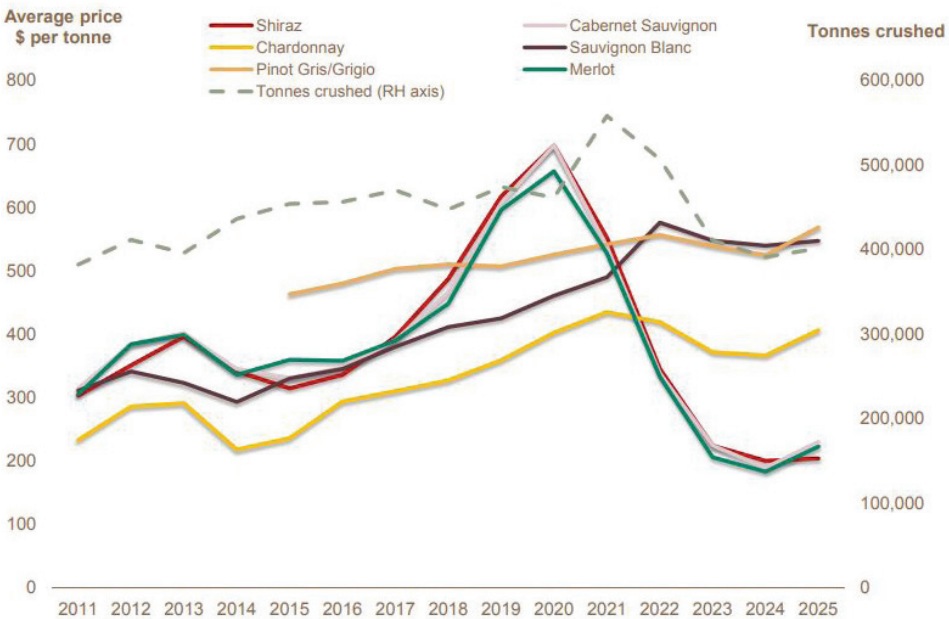
According to Vinehealth Australia data, the total vineyard area in the Riverland, as at April 30, 2025, was 20,286 hectares, a decrease of 40 hectares compared with the previous year, and 206 hectares less than it was in 2021.

There were 27 hectares of new plantings – including top-working and replacements – in the 2024–25 season, most of which were sauvignon blanc (21 hectares).

RIVERLAND



Historical weighted average price vs tonnes crushed



Current plantings by variety and year planted – whites and other

Variety	Area (hectares)				Total area (Ha)	% planted in 2024
	Pre-2022	2022	2023	2024		
White Winegrapes						
Chardonnay	4,090	26	5	4	4,125	0%
Chenin Blanc	66				66	
Colombard	673		0		673	
Doradillo	30				30	
Fiano	14	0	4		17	
Muscadelle (Tokay)	4				4	
Muscat A Petit Grains Blanc (White Frontignac)	98				98	
Muscat A Petit Grains Rouges (syn Brown Frontignac)	3		0		3	
Muscat Gordo Blanco	768				768	
Other White	31	4		0	35	0%
Palomino	5				5	
Pedro Ximenez	2				2	
Pinot Gris	291	5	10	1	308	0%
Prosecco	1	8	9		18	
Riesling	80		1		81	
Sauvignon Blanc	587	36	22	21	666	3%
Savagnin	8	3			11	
Semillon	292	2	1		294	
Sultana	83				83	
Traminer (Gewurztraminer)	71				71	
Trebbiano	12				12	
Verdelho	80				80	
Vermantino	16				16	
Viognier	90		6		96	
White Winegrapes Total	7,395	84	57	26	7,562	0%
Multi-purpose red	57				57	
Multi-purpose white	62				62	
Rootstock	26				26	
Table red	59	60	15	0	135	0%
Table white	54	31	5		90	
Unknown variety	697				697	
Grand Total	19,905	257	96	27	20,286	0%

Current plantings by variety and year planted – reds

Variety	Area (hectares)				Total area (Ha)	% planted in 2024
	Pre-2022	2022	2023	2024		
Red Winegrapes						
Barbera	2	0			2	0%
Cabernet Franc	1				1	
Cabernet Sauvignon	3,233	16	5		3,255	
Durif (Petite Sirah)	49	0	4		53	
Grenache	266	8		0	274	
Malbec	24				24	
Mataro (Mourvedre)	203				203	
Merlot	1,194		1		1,195	
Montepulciano	9	0	0		9	
Other Red	70	9			79	
Petit Verdot	458				458	
Pinot Noir	350	14	6		370	
Rubired	43	5	0		49	
Ruby Cabernet	111				111	
Sangiovese	22				22	
Saperavi	2				2	
Shiraz	5,455	26	2	0	5,484	0%
Tempranillo	48	5	0		53	
Touriga	14				14	
Red Winegrapes Total	11,555	83	19	1	11,657	0%



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BAROSSA VALLEY

FOR the second winter in a row, the Barossa Valley failed to receive the soaking winter and spring rains that had been hoped for, and drought conditions prevailed.

After a very dry 2024 autumn, where only 12 per cent (12.4mm) of the average rainfall was received, spring was even drier, with a total of only 78mm, 71 per cent of normal rainfall.

Summer continued to be dry, with rainfall at 25 per cent of average. The calendar year 2024 received a total of 302.2mm rain, or 69 per cent of average, and following the dry 2023, at 74 per cent.

Considerably warmer day and night-time temperatures in August led to budburst some two-to-three weeks earlier than normal. The dry spring conditions meant clearer skies, and night-time temperatures plummeted to below zero on September 13, 17, and 18, causing wide-spread frost damage.

Daytime temperatures in October and November remained above average, as did the nights, and vines grew fast, despite the low rainfall.

Flowering was early, although variable depending on frost impact. December and early January continued with warmer-than-average days, and harvest started early in February for many.

Barossa growers and winemakers were unable to remember an earlier start or finish to a vintage. Many finished harvest before the end of March, and even the latest sites and

Barossa Valley* winegrape intake ssummary table – red varieties

*includes Barossa zone other – 491 tonnes

Varieties	Tonnes purchased	Total value purchased	Average purchase value per tonne	Change in price year on year	Winery grown fruit (tonnes)	Winery share of crush	Total crushed (tonnes)	Estimated total value all grapes
Red								
Barbera	1						1	\$1,638
Cabernet Franc	30	\$28,291	\$932	-7%	17	35%	47	\$43,719
Cabernet Sauvignon	4,102	\$7,650,875	\$1,865	6%	2,966	42%	7,068	\$13,175,260
Durif	74	\$133,492	\$1,815	11%	13	15%	86	\$156,586
Graciano	14				9	37%	23	\$34,104
Grenache	2,759	\$5,887,390	\$2,135	-9%	905	25%	3,665	\$7,820,693
Lagrein					1	100%	1	\$1,104
Malbec	15	\$24,373	\$1,625	-10%	79	84%	94	\$152,491
Mataro/Mourvedre	847	\$1,893,695	\$2,237	-2%	528	38%	1,375	\$3,075,714
Merlot	586	\$808,396	\$1,379	15%	374	39%	960	\$1,324,426
Montepulciano	32	\$62,489	\$1,932	-6%	55	63%	87	\$168,622
Muscat à Petits Grains Rouges	2						2	\$2,520
Nebbiolo	4				0	7%	4	\$5,592
Nero d'Avola	10	\$17,705	\$1,764	-10%	39	80%	49	\$87,160
Petit Verdot	12	\$15,814	\$1,367	0%	67	85%	78	\$107,150
Pinot Meunier					2	100%	2	\$3,643
Pinot Noir	82	\$142,142	\$1,730	13%	9	10%	91	\$159,608
Sangiovese	287	\$365,389	\$1,272	-4%	43	13%	330	\$419,516
Shiraz	22,154	\$42,210,769	\$1,905	2%	14,057	39%	36,210	\$68,767,585
Tempranillo	263	\$439,919	\$1,674	-6%	98	27%	361	\$603,495
Touriga Nacional	15	\$23,382	\$1,592	0%	92	86%	107	\$169,616
Other red	259	\$450,205	\$1,737	3%	97	27%	357	\$605,974
Red Total	31,548	\$60,185,023	\$1,908	1%	19,449	38%	50,997	\$96,886,214

varieties were harvested in early April, well before Easter – which is very unusual.

In 2025, quality across the board looks great, and particular standouts are grenache and shiraz.

The Barossa's ability to thrive despite the variability of weather, gives confidence that 2025 will be yet another vintage to savour and celebrate.

The Barossa's ability to thrive despite the variability of weather gives confidence that 2025 will be yet another vintage to savour...

Barossa Valley* winegrape intake ssummary table – white varieties

*includes Barossa zone other – 2 tonnes

Varieties	Tonnes purchased	Total value purchased	Average purchase value per tonne	Change in price year on year	Winery grown fruit (tonnes)	Winery share of crush	Total crushed (tonnes)	Estimated total value all grapes
White								
Chardonnay	624	\$599,029	\$960	9%	40	6%	664	\$638,124
Chenin Blanc	13	\$22,009	\$1,697	0%	6	30%	19	\$31,512
Fiano	46	\$77,040	\$1,676	0%	15	24%	61	\$101,580
Marsanne	12	\$21,723	\$1,807	-2%	42	78%	54	\$97,360
Muscat à Petits Grains Blancs	71	\$68,202	\$957	9%	26	27%	98	\$93,306
Muscat Gordo Blanco					1	100%	1	\$814
Pinot Gris/Grigio	157	\$169,307	\$1,081	4%	57	27%	214	\$230,958
Riesling	261	\$226,595	\$867	0%	58	18%	320	\$277,035
Roussanne	28	\$54,807	\$1,953	1%	14	34%	42	\$82,605
Sauvignon Blanc	194				14	7%	208	\$188,714
Semillon	328	\$282,968	\$863	2%	83	20%	411	\$354,924
Vermentino	70				9	12%	79	\$77,127
Viognier	212	\$242,171	\$1,140	-6%	54	20%	266	\$302,910
Other white	59	\$78,726	\$1,325	9%	101	63%	160	\$227,697
White Total	2,075	\$2,086,246	\$1,005	7%	520	20%	2,595	\$2,704,665
Grand Total	33,624	\$62,271,269	\$1,852	3%	19,969	37%	53,593	\$99,590,879



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BAROSSA VALLEY

Overview of vintage statistics

The reported crush of Barossa Valley wine grapes in 2025 (including Barossa zone – other) was 53,593 tonnes, up by 7 per cent compared with the prior year’s crush.

Over the past five years, up to 2024, the average crush for the Barossa Valley has been 51,257 tonnes, making this year’s crush 5 per cent above the five-year average.

There were 105 respondents to the survey who reported crushing grapes from the Barossa Valley in 2025, compared with 102 in 2024.

The total value of wine grapes in 2025 was just under \$100m, compared with \$91m in 2024, an increase of 10 per cent.

The overall average value increased by 3 per cent, from \$1803 to \$1852/tonne. There were increases in average prices for the top two largest varieties, with shiraz up by 2 per cent, to \$1905/tonne, and cabernet sauvignon up by 6 per cent, to \$1865/tonne.

On the other hand, grenache had the highest average value of the reds, at \$2135 per tonne, but declined by 9 per cent year-on-year.

The price dispersion data shows an upward shift in prices paid, with the largest growth recorded in the \$900-to-\$1500 price bracket, with 31 per cent of grapes purchased in this range, compared with 24 per cent in 2024.

Grapes purchased at \$2000 per tonne or above also recorded an increase, from 37 per cent in 2024, to 39 per cent in 2025.

According to Vinehealth Australia data, the total vineyard area in the Barossa Valley, as at 30 April 2025, was 12,000 hectares, including 212 hectares in Barossa zone – other. This is 70 hectares more than it was last year, and about 150 hectares more than it was five-years ago.

There were 52 hectares of new vines planted in the region in the 2024–25 season, including top-working and replacements, compared with 43 in the previous season. All of these were red varieties, with the main varieties planted being grenache (22 hectares) and shiraz (17 hectares).



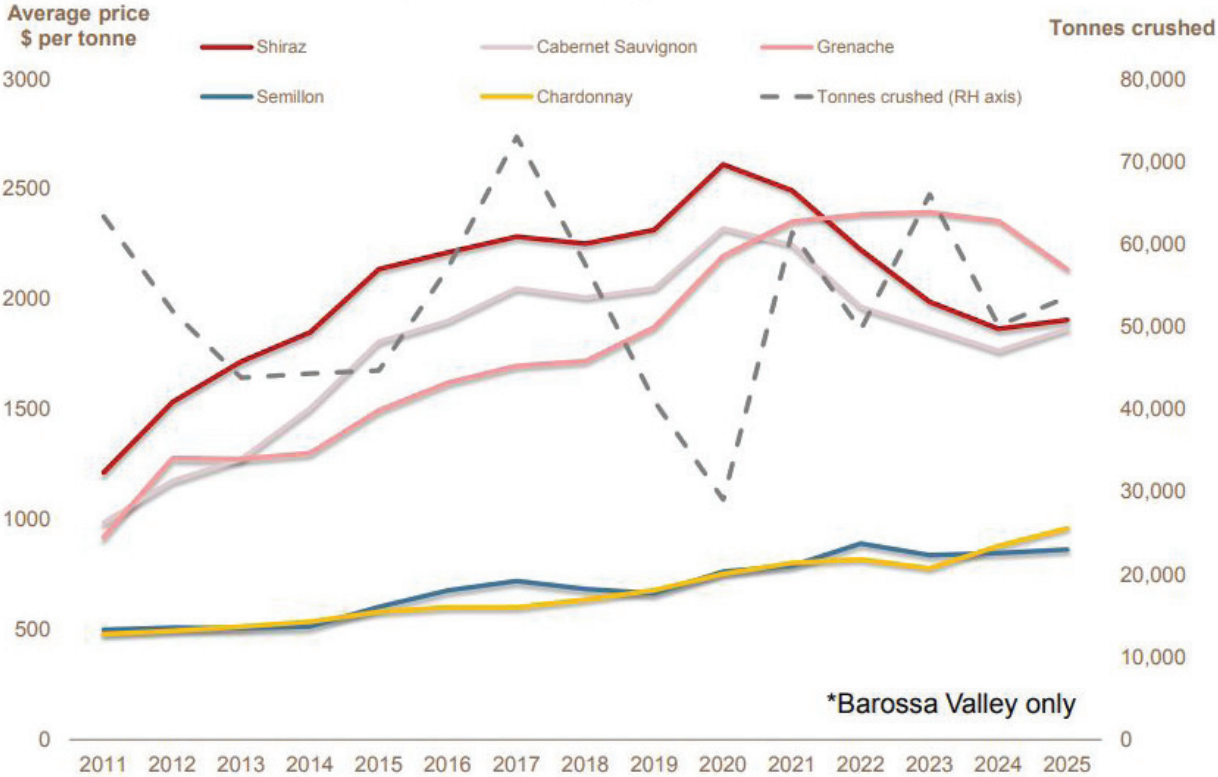
Price dispersion – purchased grapes (red)

	Tonnes purchased in each segment					
Varieties	<\$600	\$600-<\$900	\$900-<\$1500	\$1500-<\$2000	>\$2000	Total purchased
Red						
Barbera				1		1
Cabernet Franc		17	11	3		30
Cabernet Sauvignon	23	9	1,368	1,003	1,699	4,102
Durif			25	10	38	74
Graciano			4	11		14
Grenache	38	24	393	412	1,892	2,759
Malbec			10	2	3	15
Mataro/Mourvedre		19	51	168	608	847
Merlot		132	99	266	89	586
Montepulciano				20	13	32
Muscat à Petits Grains Rouges		1		1		2
Nebbiolo			4			4
Nero d'Avola				10		10
Petit Verdot	3		6	0	3	12
Pinot Noir			27		55	82
Sangiovese			251	5	31	287
Shiraz	156	861	7,026	5,595	8,516	22,154
Tempranillo			30	230	3	263
Touriga Nacional				15		15
Other red		9	90	40	120	259
Red Total	220	1,072	9,395	7,792	13,070	31,548

Price dispersion – purchased grapes (white)

	Tonnes purchased in each segment					
Varieties	<\$600	\$600-<\$900	\$900-<\$1500	\$1500-<\$2000	>\$2000	Total purchased
White						
Chardonnay		181	399	44		624
Chenin Blanc			3	8	2	13
Fiano			3	43		46
Marsanne				5	7	12
Muscat à Petits Grains Blancs		25	46			71
Pinot Gris/Grigio			131	25		157
Riesling	2	228	22	4	6	261
Roussanne				16	12	28
Sauvignon Blanc		6	188			194
Semillon	14	190	112	10	1	328
Vermentino		56		14		70
Viognier			200	12	1	212
Other white			37	17	6	59
White Total	16	686	1,141	198	35	2,075
Total purchased	236	1,757	10,535	7,991	13,105	33,624

Historical weighted average price* vs tonnes crushed

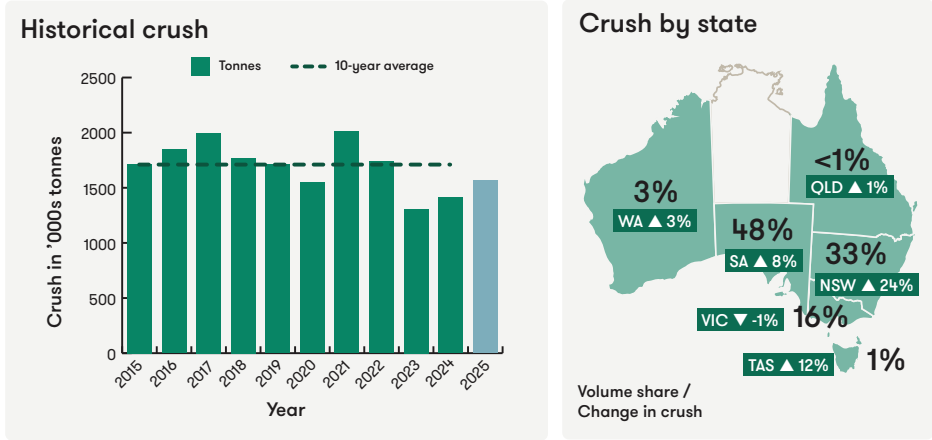


*Barossa Valley only



Market Insights

National Vintage Report 2025



Crush by variety

Top 5 red varieties (*'000 tonnes)

Shiraz	361	▲ 23%
Cabernet Sauvignon	212	▲ 40%
Merlot	80	▲ 7%
Pinot Noir	58	▲ 20%
Grenache	16	▲ <1%

Top 5 white varieties (*'000 tonnes)

Chardonnay	286	▼ -13%
Sauvignon Blanc	115	▲ 31%
Pinot Gris/Grigio	93	▲ 33%
Semillon	51	▲ 16%
Muscat Gordo Blanco	45	▼ -1%

Riverland SA								
Varieties	Tonnes purchased	Total value purchased	Average purchase value per tonne	Change in price year on year	Winery grown fruit (tonnes)	Winery grown share of crush	Total crushed (tonnes)	Estimated total value all grapes
Red								
Barbera	5						5	\$945
Cabernet Franc	6						6	\$1,168
Cabernet Sauvignon	51,702	\$11,907,311	\$230	22%	15,595	23%	67,298	\$15,498,879
Durif	1,319	\$434,597	\$330	-9%	0	0%	1,319	\$434,636
Graciano	15						15	\$5,341
Grenache	4,438	\$1,824,814	\$411	-7%	127	3%	4,565	\$1,876,825
Lagrein	19	\$11,047	\$601	0%			19	\$11,047
Malbec	176				381	68%	557	\$184,788
Mataro/Mourvèdre	2,158	\$779,218	\$361	-8%	91	4%	2,249	\$812,038
Merlot	16,367	\$3,645,483	\$223	22%	10,063	38%	26,429	\$5,886,806
Montepulciano	218	\$121,038	\$554	2%	58	21%	277	\$153,392
Muscat à Petits Grains Rouges	99	\$34,419	\$347	0%			99	\$34,419
Nebbiolo	1						1	\$105
Nero d'Avola	36						36	\$32,634
Petit Verdot	4,313	\$834,104	\$193	8%	3,869	47%	8,182	\$1,582,349
Pinot Meunier	1						1	\$150
Pinot Noir	7,665	\$4,908,569	\$640	-1%	747	9%	8,412	\$5,370,571
Pinot Noir (sparkling)	1,926	\$1,174,074	\$610	NA			1,926	\$1,174,074
Pinot Noir (still)	5,739	\$3,734,496	\$651	NA	747	12%	6,486	\$4,196,498
Ruby Cabernet	953	\$218,035	\$229	-22%	589	38%	1,541	\$352,783
Sangiovese	223	\$61,021	\$274	0%	516	70%	739	\$202,069
Shiraz	79,961	\$16,308,431	\$204	2%	22,449	22%	102,411	\$20,886,987
Tempranillo	960	\$286,894	\$299	-13%	315	25%	1,275	\$381,093
Touriga Nacional	40	\$14,225	\$359	0%	80	67%	120	\$43,099
Other red	2,997	\$1,305,319	\$435	9%	10,863	78%	13,860	\$5,019,719
Red Total	173,672	\$42,793,345	\$246	4%	65,743	27%	239,415	\$58,771,845

(continues)

Total national crush up in 2025, but value down

THE Riverland and Barossa Valley contributed towards South Australia increasing its total wine grape crush during the 2025 vintage, however pricing continues to pose challenges throughout the industry.

The recent Wine Australia National Vintage Report 2025 showed South Australia accounted for the largest share of the national crush by size, with 747,688 tonnes, or 48 per cent. This was 8 per cent higher than the very low 2024 crush, but still 13 per cent below its 10-year average of 857,640 tonnes.

The Riverland, along with other large inland regions the Riverina (NSW), and Murray Darling – Swan Hill (NSW and Victoria), together accounted for 70 per cent of the national crush, down slightly from their 10-year average – and 2024 share – of 72 per cent.

The collected crush from these inland regions combined was 1.01 million tonnes, 7 per cent below the 10-year average of 1.09 million tonnes, but around 100,000 tonnes (11 per cent) higher than the previous year’s crush of 909,039 tonnes.

The overall increase in the crush from the inland regions was driven by substantial increases from Murray Darling – Swan Hill (up 17 per cent) and

the Riverina (up 19 per cent), combined with a small increase (3 per cent) in the crush from the Riverland. Despite the increases, all three regions crushed less than they did in 2015.

After a period of very consistent vintages between 2015 and 2020, each region had an increase of 15 per cent or more in 2021, followed by decreases of 27 to 30 per cent between 2021 and 2024.

The weighted average value calculated across all purchased grapes was \$604 per tonne, down by \$10 per tonne, or 1 per cent, compared with 2024. The reduction in the overall average purchase value was the result of a decrease in the average purchase value for both red and white grapes from cool/temperate regions, offsetting increases in the average purchase value for both red and white grapes from warm inland regions.

These increases were despite substantial increases in tonnes for the warm inland regions – particularly for reds. However, it should be noted the increase in average value can relate to factors such as a change in the varietal mix – such as a higher proportion of more highly priced varieties – yield caps or contract arrangements that predate the current vintage.

Across the warm inland regions, the average value for reds saw a small increase of 1 per cent, to \$293 per tonne, which was still 32 per cent below the 10-year average, and 55 per cent below the peak of \$659 per tonne, in 2020.

The average value for white grapes increased by 6 per cent, to \$400 per tonne, which was 12 per cent above the 10-year average, and 4 per cent below a peak of \$419 per tonne, in 2022. For the fourth year in a row, the average value for inland whites was higher than for reds.

In 2025, it is estimated that winery-grown grapes accounted for 29 per cent of the crush, compared with 32 per cent in 2024, whereas the crush of purchased grapes increased by an estimated 15 per cent. An analysis of the prices paid for purchased grapes enables an estimation to be made of the value of the grapes at a region–variety level, which in turn can be aggregated to a regional or national level.

Winery-grown grapes are assigned the same value as purchased grapes of the same region–variety combination. Based on this analysis, the total value of the wine grape crush in 2025 is estimated to be \$1.13bn. The overall average value across all grapes, winery-grown and purchased, was \$722 per tonne, which was 2 per cent higher than the figure in 2024, as a result of



the increased share of reds and cool/temperate grapes in the overall mix.

The distribution of prices for warm inland grapes generally showed an upward shift in 2025. For reds, there was an increase in the percentage purchased at between \$200 to \$300 per tonne – up from 12 per cent in 2024, to 41 per cent in 2025 – and a corresponding decrease in the percentage purchased at less than \$200 per tonne, down from 46 per cent in 2024, to 23 per cent.

This reversed the result in 2024 for these lowest price brackets and saw them return to the approximate distribution of 2023. However, nearly two-thirds of purchases of inland red grapes (64 per cent) in 2025 were at below \$300 per tonne.

The 2025 Australian wine grape crush at a glance:

- ❑ The 2025 Australian wine grape crush is estimated to be 1.57 million tonnes, 8 per cent below the 10-year average of 1.71 million tonnes, but 11 per cent higher than the 2024 crush of 1.41 million tonnes.
- ❑ The crush of red varieties was 20 per cent larger than in 2024, but still well below its 10-year average, and the third-smallest since 2014.
- ❑ The crush of white varieties was just 2 per cent higher than in 2024, and 8 per cent below its 10-year average.
- ❑ After briefly overtaking reds to hold the majority share of the crush in 2024, whites decreased their share to 47 per cent in 2025 – in line with their 10-year average. Most of the major reds increased their crush in 2025, with cabernet sauvignon, shiraz and pinot noir accounting for most of the increase. Shiraz regained its position as largest variety overall, after briefly losing this position to chardonnay in 2024.
- ❑ Despite a 23 per cent increase year-on-year, the crush of shiraz was 14 per cent below its 10-year average, and 32 per cent smaller than its peak in 2021.
- ❑ The total value of the wine grape crush in 2025 is estimated to be \$1.13bn.
- ❑ The overall average value across all grapes was \$722 per tonne, which was 2 per cent higher than the figure in 2024, as a result of the increased share of reds and cool/temperate grapes in the overall mix.

The full Wine Australia National Vintage Report 2025 can be read by visiting the website (www.wineaustralia.com/market-insights/national-vintage-report).

“
South Australia accounted for 48 per cent of the national crush – the largest share by state.



Riverland (continued)								SA
Varieties	Tonnes purchased	Total value purchased	Average purchase value per tonne	Change in price year on year	Winery grown fruit (tonnes)	Winery grown share of crush	Total crushed (tonnes)	Estimated total value all grapes
White								
Chardonnay	65,723	\$26,703,201	\$406	11%	8,810	12%	74,533	\$30,315,147
Chardonnay (sparkling)	3,365	\$1,280,266	\$380	NA	947	22%	4,312	\$1,640,499
Chardonnay (still)	62,358	\$25,422,935	\$408	NA	7,863	11%	70,221	\$28,674,648
Chenin Blanc	1,018	\$338,877	\$333	1%			1,018	\$338,877
Colombard	15,461	\$4,241,594	\$274	-2%	2,275	13%	17,736	\$4,865,773
Fiano	186	\$81,522	\$439	0%	87	32%	273	\$119,688
Gewürztraminer	716				830	54%	1,546	\$580,971
Grüner Veltliner					85	100%	85	\$85,140
Muscat à Petits Grains Blancs	641	\$218,807	\$341	6%	337	34%	978	\$333,767
Muscat Gordo Blanco	15,722	\$4,893,417	\$311	4%	2,176	12%	17,899	\$5,570,766
Pinot Gris/Grigio	6,695	\$3,804,460	\$568	8%	1,835	22%	8,530	\$4,847,277
Prosecco	815	\$503,850	\$618	9%			815	\$503,850
Riesling	1,129	\$370,538	\$328	4%	275	20%	1,404	\$460,866
Roussanne	16						16	\$9,251
Sauvignon Blanc	20,188	\$11,049,018	\$547	1%	3,603	15%	23,792	\$13,020,937
Semillon	3,776	\$1,290,336	\$342	1%	3,542	48%	7,319	\$2,500,574
Verdelho	871	\$258,046	\$296	-0%	783	47%	1,654	\$490,053
Vermentino	392	\$190,856	\$487	-9%	212	35%	604	\$294,190
Viognier	1,133	\$563,004	\$497	2%	308	21%	1,441	\$716,247
Other white	2,250	\$722,486	\$321	-3%	152	6%	2,402	\$873,767
White Total	136,733	\$55,508,373	\$406	10%	25,311	16%	162,044	\$65,927,142
Grand Total	310,405	\$98,301,718	\$317	1%	91,054	23%	401,459	\$124,698,986

Barossa Valley (including Barossa zone – other: 493 tonnes)								SA
Varieties	Tonnes purchased	Total value purchased	Average purchase value per tonne	Change in price year on year	Winery grown fruit (tonnes)	Winery grown share of crush	Total crushed (tonnes)	Estimated total value all grapes
Red								
Barbera	1						1	\$1,638
Cabernet Franc	30	\$28,291	\$932	-7%	17	35%	47	\$43,719
Cabernet Sauvignon	4,102	\$7,650,875	\$1,865	6%	2,966	42%	7,068	\$13,175,260
Durif	74	\$133,492	\$1,815	11%	13	15%	86	\$156,586
Graciano	14				9	37%	23	\$34,104
Grenache	2,759	\$5,887,390	\$2,135	-9%	905	25%	3,665	\$7,820,693
Lagrein					1	100%	1	\$1,104
Malbec	15	\$24,373	\$1,625	-10%	79	84%	94	\$152,491
Mataro/Mourvèdre	847	\$1,893,695	\$2,237	-2%	528	38%	1,375	\$3,075,714
Merlot	586	\$808,396	\$1,379	15%	374	39%	960	\$1,324,426
Montepulciano	32	\$62,489	\$1,932	-6%	55	63%	87	\$168,622
Muscat à Petits Grains Rouges	2						2	\$2,520
Nebbiolo	4				0	7%	4	\$5,592
Nero d'Avola	10	\$17,705	\$1,764	-10%	39	80%	49	\$87,160
Petit Verdot	12	\$15,814	\$1,367	0%	67	85%	78	\$107,150
Pinot Meunier					2	100%	2	\$3,643
Pinot Noir	82	\$142,142	\$1,730	13%	9	10%	91	\$159,608
Sangiovese	287	\$365,389	\$1,272	-4%	43	13%	330	\$419,516
Shiraz	22,154	\$42,210,769	\$1,905	2%	14,057	39%	36,210	\$68,767,585
Tempranillo	263	\$439,919	\$1,674	-6%	98	27%	361	\$603,495
Touriga Nacional	15	\$23,382	\$1,592	0%	92	86%	107	\$169,616
Other red	259	\$450,205	\$1,737	3%	97	27%	357	\$605,974
Red Total	31,548	\$60,185,023	\$1,908	1%	19,449	38%	50,997	\$96,886,214

(continues)

Barossa Valley (including Barossa zone – other: 493 tonnes) (continued)								SA
Varieties	Tonnes purchased	Total value purchased	Average purchase value per tonne	Change in price year on year	Winery grown fruit (tonnes)	Winery grown share of crush	Total crushed (tonnes)	Estimated total value all grapes
White								
Chardonnay	624	\$599,029	\$960	9%	40	6%	664	\$638,124
Chenin Blanc	13	\$22,009	\$1,697	0%	6	30%	19	\$31,512
Fiano	46	\$77,040	\$1,676	0%	15	24%	61	\$101,580
Marsanne	12	\$21,723	\$1,807	-2%	42	78%	54	\$97,360
Muscat à Petits Grains Blancs	71	\$68,202	\$957	9%	26	27%	98	\$93,306
Muscat Gordo Blanco					1	100%	1	\$814
Pinot Gris/Grigio	157	\$169,307	\$1,081	4%	57	27%	214	\$230,958
Riesling	261	\$226,595	\$867	0%	58	18%	320	\$277,035
Roussanne	28	\$54,807	\$1,953	1%	14	34%	42	\$82,605
Sauvignon Blanc	194				14	7%	208	\$188,714
Semillon	328	\$282,968	\$863	2%	83	20%	411	\$354,924
Vermentino	70				9	12%	79	\$77,127
Viognier	212	\$242,171	\$1,140	-6%	54	20%	266	\$302,910
Other white	59	\$78,726	\$1,325	9%	101	63%	160	\$227,697
White Total	2,075	\$2,086,246	\$1,005	7%	520	20%	2,595	\$2,704,665
Grand Total	33,624	\$62,271,269	\$1,852	3%	19,969	37%	53,593	\$99,590,879



Thai prawn and avocado salad

AS TEMPERATURES START TO WARM ACROSS SOUTH AUSTRALIA, WE CAN START TO ENJOY THE VARIETY OF BRIGHT VEGETABLES GROWING IN OUR GARDENS DURING SPRING.

Particularly among Riverland home gardeners, the avocado is becoming an increasingly popular tree to have in a backyard. This simple Thai-inspired salad can be brought together in minutes for a healthy and satisfying lunch or dinner meal, and packs a range of textures and flavours.

INGREDIENTS:

- 2 avocados, halved, stone removed, peeled, thickly sliced
- 24 cooked prawns, peeled leaving tails intact, deveined
- 1 Lebanese cucumber, trimmed, peeled into ribbons
- 1½ tbsp fresh lime juice
- 1½ tsp brown sugar
- 1½ tsp fish sauce
- 1 red chilli, finely chopped
- ½ cup fresh coriander sprigs

METHOD

- 1 Divide the avocado, prawns and cucumber among serving bowls.
- 2 Combine the lime juice, sugar and fish sauce in a small bowl. Stir until the sugar dissolves.
- 3 Drizzle the lime mixture over the salad. Top with coriander sprigs and season with pepper.

Enjoy!



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Spring GROWING GUIDE

THE Riverland and Barossa Valley are both fantastic regions for gardening, especially in spring, when the soil begins to warm up and daylight hours increase.

Spring is an ideal time to plant a wide range of fruits and vegetables that will thrive through summer and into early autumn. Here's a guide to the best fruits and vegetables to grow in during spring, including advice on timing, conditions, and varieties.



BEANS

Beans, especially bush and climbing varieties, are easy to grow in spring. They dislike frost, so wait until temperatures are consistently above 15C.

Planting time: September to November

Recommended varieties: blue lake (climbing), dwarf French

Tips: Avoid nitrogen-rich fertilizers as beans fix their own nitrogen; instead, use compost-rich soil.

CITRUS TREES

Spring is an excellent time to plant citrus trees like lemons, oranges, and mandarins. They love the warmth and long-growing season.

Planting time: September to November

Recommended varieties: eureka lemon, Valencia orange, imperial mandarin

Tips: Plant in a sunny, wind-protected area. Regular watering and citrus-specific fertiliser will ensure healthy growth and fruiting.

PASSIONFRUIT

Passionfruit vines thrive in the warm South Australian climate and are perfect for spring planting. They require a sunny position and a sturdy support structure.

Planting time: September to November

Recommended varieties: black passionfruit

Tips: Keep the roots cool with mulch and water deeply during hot periods.

CAPSICUMS

Capsicums love the warmth, making them perfect for spring planting. They prefer well-drained soil enriched with organic matter.

Planting time: October to early November

Recommended varieties: California wonder, sweet banana

Tips: Capsicums are slow to mature but can yield well into autumn if planted early in spring.

CUCUMBERS

Cucumbers grow well in the spring once the soil has warmed up. They require full sun, plenty of water, and fertile soil rich in compost or manure.

Planting time: October to December

Recommended varieties: Lebanese, apple cucumber, marketmore

Tips: Train cucumbers up a trellis to save space and improve airflow, which reduces disease.

PUMPKINS

Pumpkins are space-hungry but thrive in the South Australian climate. Plant seeds directly into the soil once it has warmed, usually by mid-spring.

Planting time: October to early November

Recommended varieties: Queensland blue, butternut

Tips: Choose a sunny spot with room to sprawl or train vines up a sturdy trellis.

CARROTS

Carrots grow best in light, sandy soil free of rocks and clumps. They enjoy the warming temperatures of spring, but can struggle in the intense summer heat.

Planting time: August to October

Recommended varieties: nantes, baby Amsterdam

Tips: Thin seedlings to allow room for roots to develop, and water consistently for even growth.

LETTUCE

Lettuce is a quick crop for the cooler part of spring. As the weather heats up, it may bolt, so it's best planted in early to mid-spring.

Planting time: August to October

Recommended varieties: Cos, butterhead, salad mix

Tips: Plant successively every two weeks for a continuous harvest. Partial shade can help extend the growing period into early summer.

STRAWBERRIES

Spring is the perfect time to plant strawberry runners. They enjoy full sun and slightly acidic, well-draining soil.

Planting time: August to October

Recommended varieties: albion, tioga, red gauntlet

Tips: Mulch with straw to retain moisture, suppress weeds, and keep fruit clean.

TOMATOES

Tomatoes are a spring and summer staple in South Australian gardens. They thrive in full sun and well-drained soil. In spring, once the danger of frost has passed – typically by mid-to-late September – you can plant tomato seedlings, or start seeds indoors a few weeks earlier.

Recommended varieties: grosse lisse, cherry roma, sweet bite.

Tips: Stake or cage your tomatoes early to support their growth and prevent fungal diseases by keeping leaves off the ground.

ZUCCHINI

Zucchini is fast-growing and highly productive. It enjoys the warm, sunny days of South Australian spring and will produce fruit within six-to-eight weeks of planting.

Planting time: Late September to November

Recommended varieties: black beauty, Lebanese

Tips: Ensure good air circulation around the plants to avoid powdery mildew, and pick zucchini when young and tender for the best flavour.



FINAL TIPS FOR SPRING PLANTING

- **Soil preparation is key.** Before planting, enrich your soil with compost, aged manure, or organic matter.
- **Mulch to retain moisture and regulate soil temperature.**
- **Water deeply and regularly, especially during dry spells.**
- **Use companion planting to naturally deter pests**—like planting basil near tomatoes or marigolds near beans.
- **Watch for pests like aphids, slugs, and caterpillars, especially as the weather warms.**

Spring is a dynamic and rewarding time for South Australian gardeners. With the right timing, care, and plant selection, you can set the stage for a productive and delicious harvest throughout the warmer months. Whether you're growing salad greens, sweet berries, or hearty vegetables, your spring garden can thrive in this sunny and fertile state.



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AG NEWS



Learn about the latest game-changing technologies in agriculture

THE latest information on new technologies that can assist South Australian primary producers to overcome challenges, including climate adaptation, is now available through a series of informative videos.

The videos available on the Department of Primary Industries and Regions (PIRSA) website feature case studies of projects funded under the State Government's AgTech Growth Fund.

The fund was designed to accelerate the development and commercialisation of innovative agricultural technologies in South Australia's agricultural sector through grants of up to \$100,000 to projects that addressed a specific industry challenge including:

- ❑ Improving drought resilience and climate adaptation for primary producers.

- ❑ Improving carbon management, sustainability credentials or natural capital on farm.
 - ❑ Improving market access and maximise value for primary producers through traceability.
- Featured technologies include:
- ❑ Airborne Logic – implementing technology and reporting systems for wine grape growers to share carbon stock data through the industry's sustainability program.
 - ❑ Althena IR Tech – further development of an irrigation scheduling system.
 - ❑ Cropify – using AI to improve the accuracy and efficiency of grain grading, specifically pulses.
 - ❑ Datahash – adding a consumer engagement capability to verify dairy industry retail compliance data.

- ❑ Eldridge Fresh Organics – development of an AI system to integrate greenhouse monitoring of temperature, water control and carbon emission reporting to inform future tech upgrades.
 - ❑ Flux Robotics – a mechanical weeding system initially for the horticultural sector before being scaled up for broadacre production.
 - ❑ Ripen Tech – producing and installing 'load cells' in a vineyard demonstration site to enable the continuous log of berry weight between environmental factors.
 - ❑ Woven Optics - trialling a new version of their optical, hand-held testing device for wool producers to know fleece quality in real-time.
- Minister for Primary Industries and Regional Development Clare Scriven said "the AgTech initiatives under this

program highlight why South Australian primary producers have a well-founded reputation for being some of the most innovative and resourceful in the world".

"I encourage primary producers to check out these videos and learn more about the latest AgTech solutions," Ms Scriven said.

"It is estimated that the return on realising the potential of AgTech is around \$2.6bn a year in agriculture gross value of production in South Australia through the delivery of technology driven efficiencies.

"It also provides the benefit of managing our scarce resources at a time when climate challenges increasingly impact on our primary industries."

For more information about the videos and associated AgTech Growth Fund projects, visit the website (www.pir.sa.gov.au/agtech-growth-fund).

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- **Patty Neal, Ngapala SA**

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