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# Wine Industry Newsletter

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## Safeguarding WA's grapevine genetics

### Germplasm relocation underway

A vital initiative is underway to protect and preserve Western Australia's nationally significant grapevine germplasm collection, currently housed at the Manjimup Horticultural Research Institute (MHRI). The collection, comprising over 130 varieties and 180 clones, has been quarantined following the detection of *Diaporthe ampelina* (Phomopsis cane and leaf spot), a declared pest in WA.

To ensure continued access to high-health, verified grapevine material, the Department of Primary Industries and Regional Development (DPIRD), Wine Australia, Wines of WA and the WA Vine Improvement Association (WAVIA) are collaborating to relocate 145 priority accessions to the University of Western Australia's (UWA) Shenton Park facility. This move will establish a clean, 'true-to-type' collection aligned with Wine Australia's National Grapevine Collection (NGC) program.

The project involves rigorous virus testing, hot water treatment, and propagation protocols to eliminate disease risk.

The relocation is expected to be completed by August 2026, with a minimum of 3 healthy vines per accession to be planted at the new UWA site. This strategic relocation not only addresses biosecurity concerns but also reinforces the long-term sustainability and innovation capacity of the Australian wine industry.



**Wine Australia NGC program manager Nick Dry taking cuttings at MHRI**



**DPIRD Research Scientist Richard Fennessy, preparing cuttings for sterilisation prior to cool storage**

For more information on this project contact [Richard Fennessy](#) or [Nick Dry](#).



## Clonal evaluation trial wines bottled

In July, DPIRD's Bunbury-based wine research team completed bottling wines from 2 clonal evaluation projects:

- 'Demonstrating how clonal selection can influence Margaret River Cabernet Sauvignon wine quality'
- 'Demonstrating the influence of clonal selection on Southern Forest Pinot Noir vineyard performance and wine quality'.

Details of both projects were featured in the June 2025 edition of the Wine Industry Newsletter.

The team analysed 28 individual parcels across the 2 projects for free and total sulphur dioxide, pH and titratable acidity.

Prior to bottling, each parcel was racked, then received a sulphur dioxide addition, dissolved gases adjusted and filtered.

Bottling was done entirely by hand, volume adjusted, gassed, screw capped and labelled before being placed in temperature-controlled storage.

These wines will be stored for at a minimum of 2 months before being presented at industry tasting workshops, where the influence of clonal variation on wine quality and style will be explored.

### Acknowledgements

Funding for both activities were received via Wine Australia's Regional Program (administered by Wines of WA).



**DPIRD Technical Officer Yu-Yi Liao  
with wines bottled in 20°C cool room**

# Clonal selection shaping the future of WA Cabernet Sauvignon

A 4-year trial conducted at Howard Park Wines' Leston vineyard in Margaret River has revealed how clonal selection can significantly influence vineyard performance and wine attributes in Cabernet Sauvignon. Led by Richard Fennessy, the project aimed to provide producers with practical insights into clonal variability across multiple vintages.

The trial involved 12 Cabernet clones from Western Australia, South Australia, and international sources, grafted onto mature vines in a replicated and randomised block design.

Over 4 vintages, researchers recorded phenological stages, berry and bunch weights, yield, and wine chemistry, with small-lot wines produced under standardised conditions to optimise clonal expression.

Key findings include:

- **Yield:** significant differences were observed between the clones; yields differed by 5 t/ha.
- **Bunches numbers and weights:** the data shows a clear separation of several clones based on these parameters.
- **Acid retention:** differences in acid adjustment requirements were observed across the seasons.
- **Climate resilience:** The 2023–24 season, the hottest and driest on record, provided valuable data on clone performance under extreme conditions, offering insights into climate adaptation strategies.

Although sensory analysis was not part of the formal study, wines from the trial have been showcased in industry tastings, allowing producers to experience the stylistic diversity firsthand.

The project reinforces the value of multi-clonal plantings as a tool for managing compressed vintages, mitigating climate risks, and crafting distinctive wine styles.

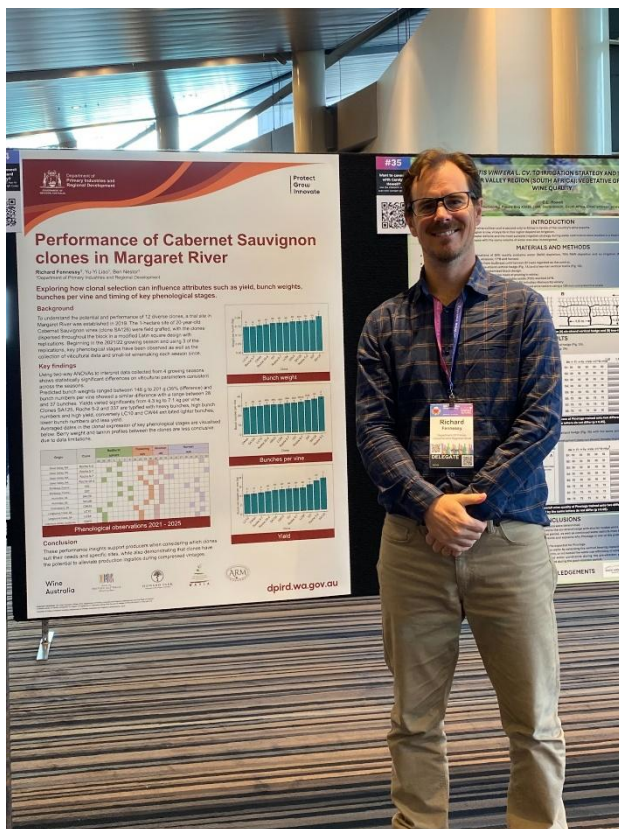
Research Scientist Richard Fennessy is available to deliver a summary of the key findings and a comprehensive tasting of the clones via regional wine tasting workshops over the next 12 months. Producers are encouraged to register an expression of interest to [richard.fennessy@dpird.wa.gov.au](mailto:richard.fennessy@dpird.wa.gov.au).

This project has been funded via the Wine Australia Regional Program which is administered by Wines of WA. Industry collaborators include Howard Park Wines, WAVIA and ARM Nursery.

## DPIRD work on show at national wine conference

Held every 3 years, the Australian Wine Industry Technical Conference (AWITC) is the premier technical event for the Australian wine industry. This year's event was held in Adelaide 20-23 July and consisted of an extensive program of plenary sessions, workshops, posters, and the industry's most extensive trade exhibition. There were over 1,000 attendees to the conference and 2,000 to the trade exhibition.

Featuring on the workshop program was DPIRD Research Scientist Richard Fennessy, presenting a 4 year project demonstrating the influence of clonal selection on Cabernet Sauvignon vineyard performance and wine attributes. Richard was joined by Nic Bowen, Howard Park Wines Chief Winemaker from which the trial is hosted, presenting key findings from this work and a comprehensive wine tasting of wines made at the Bunbury DPIRD wine laboratory.



**DPIRD Research Scientist Richard Fennessy with one of the poster displays at the AWITC**

DPIRD also featured strongly in the poster display with 3 separate posters on show. The posters and authors were:

- Geology, soils and climate of Western Australia's wine regions  
– Peter Tille (retired), Angela Stuart-Street (retired), Peter Gardiner and Richard Fennessy
- Evaluating Pinot Noir clones in the context of Western Australia  
– Yu-Yi Liao and Richard Fennessy
- Performance of Cabernet Sauvignon clones in Margaret River  
– Richard Fennessy, Yu-Yi Liao and Ben Nestor

Contributing to this conference showcased to a national and international audience DPIRD's capabilities in wine related research, development and adoption.

## New regional program activities planned for 2025 – 26

Wines of Western Australia, in collaboration with DPIRD and Wine Australia, has launched a targeted set of activities for the 2025–26 period to support innovation, sustainability, and resilience across the state's 9 wine regions. These initiatives respond to strategic priorities identified through industry consultation and aim to deliver practical outcomes for producers.

### Key activities planned

- **Pinot Noir clonal trial – Year 2**

A field trial in the Pemberton region will evaluate the performance of 14 Pinot Noir clones, producing small-lot still and sparkling wines. The goal is to inform growers about clonal diversity and guide future planting decisions to meet rising demand for lighter-style reds and sparkling wines.

- **Travel bursaries for AWITC**

Two early-career professionals received support to attend the Australian Wine Industry Technical Conference in Adelaide. This initiative promotes professional development and knowledge sharing across the WA wine community.

- **Biosecurity simulation**

A full-day simulation in Margaret River will model a fictional phylloxera outbreak, showcasing response protocols and strengthening collaboration between industry, government, and service providers. This proactive approach aims to improve preparedness and protect WA's wine industry from biosecurity threats.

- **Biosecurity planning workshops**

Workshops in Margaret River, Great Southern, and the Swan Valley will educate producers on managing biosecurity risks associated with vineyard visitors. The sessions will provide practical tools and encourage adoption of best practices aligned with Sustainable Winegrowing Australia certification.

These activities reflect WA's commitment to sustainable viticulture, strategic RD&E adoption, and industry development.

For more information contact [Richard Fennessy](#), DPIRD Research Scientist.

## Potential economic impact of grapevine phylloxera on WA's wine industry

A recent study published in the *Australian Journal of Grape and Wine Research* authored by a collection of WA researchers has modelled the potential spread and economic impact of grapevine phylloxera (*Daktulosphaira vitifoliae*) in Western Australia, highlighting significant risks to the region's winegrape industry.

Phylloxera, a root-feeding insect devastating to *Vitis vinifera*, has long been present in eastern Australia but has not yet reached WA. However, increased interstate tourism — particularly via new flights to Busselton Margaret River Airport — raises the risk of introduction. WA's reliance on own-rooted vines (~95% of plantings) and susceptible soils makes the region particularly vulnerable.

Using a cellular automata model, researchers simulated a hypothetical phylloxera incursion in the Margaret River wine region. The model incorporated soil texture, vineyard locations, and road networks to estimate spread over a 50-year period. Without containment measures, phylloxera could infest 60–70% of WA's winegrape area, affecting up to 9,100 hectares.

The projected economic impact is substantial. The only effective control once phylloxera is established is replanting with resistant rootstocks — an expensive and disruptive process. Replanting infested vineyards with resistant rootstocks and associated revenue losses could cost the industry between \$150–290 million over 50 years — equivalent to a 3–6% annual contraction in winegrape production. The study also notes broader regional economic effects due to the wine industry's strong multiplier, potentially leading to a 4.2–8.4% contraction in the local economy.

Sensitivity analysis revealed that the timing of infestation and discount rates significantly influence cost estimates. Early detection and containment—such as exclusion zones—could yield a return on investment of up to \$1.60 per dollar spent.

The study highlights the importance of early detection, strict biosecurity, and potential exclusion zones to slow spread.

### What you can do

- Stay informed about biosecurity protocols.
- Limit vineyard access to visitors.
- Ensure equipment and footwear are clean.
- Consider futureproofing with resistant rootstocks.

With WA's wine industry at risk, proactive measures today could save millions tomorrow.

The paper can be accessed at the [Wiley Online Library](#).



# Wines of Western Australia cultivate leadership

## Great Southern program 2025

### 12 emerging wine industry leaders selected for inaugural regional leadership accelerator program

Wines of Western Australia (WoWA), together with industry partners Great Southern Wine Producers Association, DPIRD, Wine Australia, and Rootlings, is proud to announce the inaugural Cultivate Leadership Program 2025.

Launched across the Great Southern wine region, the program brings together 12 emerging leaders from WA's key wine regions for an intensive professional development journey.

Running from September to November, participants will complete 3 residential workshops combining industry-specific knowledge with leadership training, equipping the next generation of wine industry leaders with the skills and insight to shape the future of WA wine.

Larry Jorgensen, CEO of Wines of Western Australia, said the program represents an important milestone for the state's wine industry.

'Our regions are the backbone of Western Australia's wine industry. Cultivate Leadership is about equipping the next generation of leaders with the tools, networks, and vision to drive sustainable growth and innovation for decades to come,' he said.

Mark Forrest, Executive Officer of the Great Southern Wine Producers Association, said that the Great Southern was proud to host the inaugural program.

"By bringing together emerging leaders from across WA, we're not only developing individual careers but also strengthening the resilience and prosperity of our regional wine communities," Mr Forrest said.

Rootlings WA Youth Scholarship recipient Sam Palmer said that being recognised as an emerging leader in the wine industry was humbling and that he was excited to learn from industry professionals, collaborate with peers, and use the opportunity to help build a strong, resilient future for the wine community.

Kelly Kay, Owner of Bunderra Estate (Blackwood Valley) said that the program will help her to step into greater leadership roles within the Blackwood Valley while connecting with peers from across WA.

Cultivate Leadership 2025 aligns with Wine Australia's Next Crop program and Rootlings' commitment to youth engagement in wine, ensuring WA talent is part of a national pipeline of future industry leaders. By investing in leadership development, the program strengthens the long-term resilience of the wine industry while ensuring emerging talent remains connected to regional communities.





Wines of Western Australia  
**Cultivate Leadership**  
GREAT SOUTHERN 2025



Department of  
Primary Industries and  
Regional Development



Wine  
Australia



**Emerging wine industry leaders on the regional leadership accelerator program**

## **Cohort 2025 participants**

- Kelly Kay – Blackwood Valley, Bunderra Estate, Owner
- Tayla Semmens – Blackwood Valley, Bridgetown Winery, Owner/Winemaker
- Felicia Borgomastro – Geographe, Saint Aidan Wines, Owner/Manager
- Giacomo Picin – Great Southern, Ferngrove Estate, Vineyard Manager
- Ian Fenech – Great Southern, Singlefile Wines, Cellar Door Manager
- Laura Penniment – Great Southern, Alkooki Wines, Manager
- Liam Carmody – Great Southern, Forest Hill Estate | Lonely Stone, Senior Winemaker/Owner
- Samuel Palmer – Great Southern, Castle Rock Estate, Winemaker
- Benjamin Totino – Margaret River, Credaro Family Estate, Assistant Winemaker
- Christine Harper – Margaret River, Passel Estate, Sales Manager
- Christopher Gillmore – Margaret River, Clairault Streicker Wines, Viticulturist/Senior Manager
- Darran Stone – Margaret River, Stones + Thunder, Owner

The program is proudly delivered in partnership with:

- Wines of Western Australia
- Great Southern Wine Producers Association
- Department of Primary Industries and Regional Development
- Wine Australia
- Rootlings: Australian Wine Youth Network (Scholarship Partner)

For more details, contact Eloise Jarvis, Program Manager at WoWA.

## Rootlings: Margaret River field day

On September 1, the Rootlings Field Day brought 19 young WA wine professionals together for a successful day of learning and connection in Margaret River.

Curated by WA State Champions Sam Palmer of Castle Rock Estate and Laura Penniment of Alkoomi Wines, the itinerary was designed to foster community and inspire the next generation.



### Rootlings delegation at Deepwoods Estate

The group visited Matt Buchan at Deepwoods Estate, explored the vineyard and new winery at Wayfinder Wines with Maddy Lyons and Andrew Trio, and engaged in a detailed discussion with Rob Mann of Corymbia Wine.

The day concluded at Margaret River TAFE, where Charlotte Newton led a crucial conversation about the future of the industry.

According to National Project Officer Jenna Vaughan, the event was a significant success, leaving participants feeling 'inspired, invigorated, and connected.'

Rootlings is a network for individuals aged 35 and under, working in the Australian wine industry and is supported by Wine Australia and the ASVO.

More information is available at the [Rootlings website](#).



## Agrochemical update

The Australian wine industry is facing changes in agrochemical regulations following recent decisions by the Australian Pesticides and Veterinary Medicines Authority (APVMA). The AWRI has recently released information to support vineyard managers and growers preparing for the 2025/26 spray season.

### Fenitrothion use on grapevines no longer supported

The APVMA has announced its final decision to withdraw support for the use of fenitrothion on grapevines, effective from 19 August 2025. This insecticide, previously used to control locusts and grasshoppers, will undergo a 12-month phase-out period, ending on 14 August 2026. After this date, possession of fenitrothion products labelled for grape use will be considered an offence.

#### Key implications

- Labels of registered products have been updated to remove grapevine use.
- Sumithion ULV premium grade insecticide (APVMA product number 50774) has been cancelled.
- Growers must consult with their winery or grape purchaser before using fenitrothion during the phase-out period, as it remains listed in the 2025/26 'Dog Book' as 'restricted for use by some wineries.'

### Safe management of de-registered chemicals

To comply with Sustainable Winegrowing Australia standards:

- Segregate fenitrothion products from other insecticides.
- Record the 'last use date' in your chemical inventory.
- Register unused stock with ChemClear for safe disposal.

### Cancelled products: prepare for safe disposal

Several agrochemical products have had their registrations cancelled as of 1 July 2025, with a last use date of 30 June 2026. These include:

Product Name	Active Ingredient(s)	Target	APVMA Product No.
Alpha C 100 EC	alpha-cypermethrin	Pink cutworm, Apple weevil	66052
Axion MZ WG	mancozeb + metalaxyl-m	Downy mildew	87679
Axiom MZ 720	mancozeb + metalaxyl	Downy mildew	51217



Product Name	Active Ingredient(s)	Target	APVMA Product No.
Custodia	azoxystrobin + tebuconazole	Botrytis, Downy mildew, Powdery mildew	66541
Downright	dimethomorph	Downy mildew	70040
Ethephon 720 SL (Ozcrop & Rainbow)	ethephon	Plant growth regulator	66352 / 64841
Getset	chlormequat	Plant growth regulator	69716
Thiragranz	Thiram	Black spot	48621
Lepidex 500	trichlorfon	Grapevine moth	33110

Additionally, Diazinon and Chlorpyrifos have early 'last use dates' on grapevines: 10 September and 30 September 2025, respectively.

Growers are urged to review their chemical inventories and register obsolete products with [ChemClear](#) to ensure safe disposal.

## New active constituents

The following new active constituents are now registered by the APVMA for use in winegrape production and are included in the 'Dog book' for the first time:

### Mandipropamid + oxathiapiprolin

APVMA product number 92989: Keybri Ultra fungicide is a Syngenta product registered for control of Downy Mildew in winegrapes. It is an activity group 40 + 49 fungicide.

Recommended export harvest interval (withholding period): Use no later than E-L 29, berries peppercorn size (not greater than 4mm diameter).

Note: Affinity Labs is working to include oxathiapiprolin in the agrochemical residue screen for vintage 2026.

### Orange oil

APVMA product number 89248: Prev-Am fungicide, miticide and insecticide is distributed by Rovensa ANZ and is registered in winegrapes for the control of bud mite and powdery mildew, and for the suppression of mealybug, scale and botrytis. It is an unclassified activity group product.

Recommended export harvest interval (withholding period): Use no later than 30 days before harvest.

## Further information

- For queries on fenitrothion: [chemicalreview@apvma.gov.au](mailto:chemicalreview@apvma.gov.au) | (02) 6770 2400

- For AWRI technical viticulture or winemaking support: [helpdesk@awri.com.au](mailto:helpdesk@awri.com.au) | (08) 8313 6600
- Visit the [AWRI website](#) for a full list of cancelled products and updates to the 'Dog Book.'

## Acknowledgement

This update from the AWRI is supported by Wine Australia through levies from grapegrowers and winemakers, with matching funds from the Australian Government. AWRI is a proud member of the Wine Innovation Cluster, Adelaide, SA.

## Future events

### DPIRD food and beverage market development workshops

Western Australian food and beverage businesses are encouraged to attend DPIRD's upcoming trade workshops, providing valuable insight on navigating export markets and how to perfect the sales pitch for domestic and international markets.

Whether new to exporting or looking to scale up international operations, the day 1 workshop 'Beyond Borders: Export Focus' will provide actionable insights and expert guidance. The day 2 workshop 'Pitch Perfect: Domestic and International Markets' will deliver the tools to speak the buyers' language and pitch with confidence.

### Details and registration

Participants are welcome to register for both workshops or can attend just one of the days.

- **Day 1: Beyond Borders: Export Focus workshop**

Wednesday 24 September | 9am to 4pm | The Hub, Bentley

- **Day 2: Pitch Perfect: Domestic & International Markets workshop**

Thursday 25 September | 9am to 1pm | The Hub, Bentley

Participants will receive workshop slides with sections for notes, additional resources and handbooks/worksheets in hard copy and digital formats.

[Register](#) now for individual workshops or for the entire package.

Use code **EARLYBIRD20** for a discounted ticket price.

### Identifying commercial opportunities for food waste

Delivered by Curtin University academics in partnership with the Department of Primary Industries and Regional Development and the [End Food Waste Cooperative Research Centre](#), this 2-day program gives food and beverage professionals the tools to turn waste into opportunity.

Designed for primary producers, manufacturers, and food service businesses, this 2-day workshop blends research-backed insights with practical strategies to reduce waste and drive commercial outcomes.

Participants will learn to map, quantify, and identify the drivers of food waste in their business, conduct desktop market research, and apply pre-feasibility and cost-benefit tools to assess opportunities. The program includes tailored guidance, a review of market research findings, and peer feedback.

By attending this masterclass, you will:

- Learn how to map and audit (i.e. quantify) your food waste flows within the context of your business and supply chain.
- Perform desktop market reviews to identify and benchmark possible commercial outcomes for your food waste from environmental and financial perspectives.
- Use pre-feasibility and cost-benefit analysis tools to assess possible commercial outcomes.

- Assess any theoretical improvements to greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions by reducing your food waste footprint.

## Details and registration

### **Curtin Bentley, Tech Park**

Day 1: 8 October 2025

Day 2: 5 November 2025

### **Abbey Beach Resort Busselton**

Day 1: 27 October 2025

Day 2: 19 November 2025

Cost: \$130 per person

Further details and registration at [Identifying commercial opportunities for food waste | Study](#)

## Unboxing sustainable packaging

Join DPIRD and AIFST (Australian Institute of Food Science & Technology) for a half day interactive workshop, where Nerida Kelton and Ralph Moyle from the Australasian Institute of Packaging (AIP) will discuss all things sustainable packaging for food and beverage businesses.

The Unboxing Sustainable Packaging workshop will take participants through regulations, trends and guidelines for packing their product.

Participants will be able to walk away from the workshop with a better understanding of:

- Global, domestic, and local WA new packaging and waste regulations, including regulations for single use plastics, extended producers, FOGO, compostable packaging and eco packaging.
- Learn about sustainable design for the wine industry – priority areas and innovation.
- Regulations for the Container Deposit Scheme.
- How to design your packaging to be recycle ready, have a lower environmental impact and meet regulations that are coming to Australia.
- The importance of data in packaging including packaging specifications and lifecycle assessment.
- Packaging design guidelines for Sustainability and Accessibility & Inclusivity.
- Addressing food waste and loss through Save Food Packaging guidelines and more.

## Details and registration

[Monday 20 October - Margaret River Heart](#)

[Wednesday 22 October – The Hub Bentley](#)

9am – 1pm, with networking lunch and consultations to follow.

Cost: \$20 per person



## 2025 ASVO Awards Dinner

The ASVO Awards for Excellence recognises the achievements of some of the most dedicated and professional individuals in the wine industry.

ASVO Award recipients are nominated by ASVO members, with the finalists decided by an ASVO Board appointed selection committee, comprised of individuals who themselves are distinguished in the fields of viticulture and oenology who demonstrate exceptional leadership ability and vision.

Join us to celebrate the winners of the ASVO Viticulturist and ASVO Winemaker of the year, and the new Wine Science and Technology Award. We will announce the ASVO Best Viticultural Paper of the Year, Best Oenology Paper of the Year, and the Dr Peter May Award for the most cited AJGWR paper published in the previous five years.

### Details and registration

When: Thursday 13 November

Where: National Wine Centre Adelaide

Visit the [ASVO website](#) for more information.

## Finlaysons Wine Roadshow – Margaret River

### The grape re-set: Buying and selling Australian vineyards and wineries

The Australian wine industry is undergoing a significant transformation, with a surge in winery and vineyard assets hitting the market. While financial stress is driving many sales, others stem from succession planning or retirement. At the same time, well-positioned businesses are seizing the opportunity to acquire quality assets at reduced prices, creating a dynamic environment of buyers and sellers. To support industry participants navigating this shift, a seminar hosted by Finlaysons, alongside Australian Grape & Wine and Wine Australia, will provide essential insights into maximising value, avoiding costly pitfalls, and understanding the current market landscape.

The seminar will feature expert guidance from KPMG on asset types, locations, and market trends, as well as practical legal and financial advice from Finlaysons on structuring transactions, conducting due diligence, and managing tax implications. Whether you're looking to exit, expand, or invest, the session offers valuable takeaways to help you make informed decisions. Held in a relaxed setting with afternoon tea and networking drinks, the event is priced to encourage broad participation, including discounted rates for association members and additional attendees from the same business.

### Details and registration

When: Monday 1 December 2025

Where: Howard Park Wines

Visit [Eventbrite](#) for further details and registration.

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