Murray Valley Winegrowers

MVW News & Views

Representing the Murray-Darling and Swan Hill wine regions NSW-VIC

August 2024
www.mvwi.com.au

Vote YES for a Positive Future!

August marks a crucial time for the wine industry in the Murray-Darling and Swan Hill regions. This is the moment for all winegrowers on both sides of the border to cast their votes in favor of continuing the Murray Valley Wine Grape Industry Development Committee (IDC) for another four-year term.

A majority vote in support of the IDC ensures that both the IDC and Murray Valley Winegrowers (MVW) will continue to provide essential services to growers, enabling the industry to strengthen.

By voting YES, you're supporting the continuity of these vital services that contribute to the success and growth of our wine industry.

MVW plays a significant role in the industry, offering organised representation, immediate communication on issues affecting grape supply, demand, and pricing, information forums, workshops, assistance in finding buyers for grapes, access to levy-funded viticultural help and weather station services. Consider the possibilities that continued support will bring to our region, and then imagine if the IDC and MVW didn't exist!

Why IDC Funding Matters

The IDC's funding is the backbone of the services MVW provides. Through the funds collected by the IDC, which are overseen and allocated for various projects, MVW is empowered to support growers' interests. These activities include providing valuable data through weather station networks, the MVW News & Views and Easy Update email services, annual winegrape crush reports, and biosecurity and pest management monitoring. Additionally, MVW maintains essential links with organisations such as Australian Grape & Wine Inc., Plant Health Australia, State Agriculture Departments, Wine Australia, the Inland Wine Regions Alliance, Wine Victoria and Wine NSW, the Australian Competition & Consumer Commission (ACCC), and many more.

The IDC is a grower-controlled committee operating under Victorian legislation, with an agreement extending its influence across the border into NSW. This cooperative approach ensures that the entire Murray-Darling and Swan Hill regions benefit from the services provided.

Your Vote Matters!

In early August, the Victorian Electoral Commission (VEC) sent ballot papers to all registered growers on the MVW database. Voting is not just a responsibility; it's an opportunity to secure a brighter future for our industry.

Please ensure your completed and signed ballot papers are returned to the VEC by the close of business on September 5, 2024. To avoid any delays due to variable mail delivery times, it's best to vote early.

Let's Keep the Momentum Going – Vote YES!

When deciding to vote YES, remember the incredible value the IDC brings to our industry. A YES vote is a vote for continuity, progress, and growth. Without the IDC, MVW would lose a critical funding source, and its valuable services could be at risk. Your support ensures that MVW continues to be the strong, regional voice for growers, advocating for our collective interests and helping our industry succeed

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MVW Chair, Chris Dent commented "The key issue to address is voting early, let's not be complacent and fail to get around to sending the ballot papers back. It's an easy process, vote and sign the ballot paper, put it in the return envelope, and put it in the mail"

"I am confident that when growers reflect on the current 4-year term of the IDC, and the support that MVW provides, they will vote YES to continue with their IDC, acknowledging the significant and positive impact the region's peak industry bodies have had during some really challenging times. Maintaining an encouraging and forward-looking approach", Chris said

By voting YES, you're casting a vote for the ongoing success and sustainability of your industry. Let's keep moving forward together!

Notice Board

Keep up with the weather observations & Disease Alerts in your area

Be one of the hundreds that check the MVW website for weather observations throughout the Murray Valley region. Currently, MVW has 15 weather stations located around the district.
Located at: www.mvwi.com.au

A new disease alert system will be in operation for the coming growing season, it's called GrapeWatch. This has been communicated to MVW members over the two years whilst it has been in the development phase.

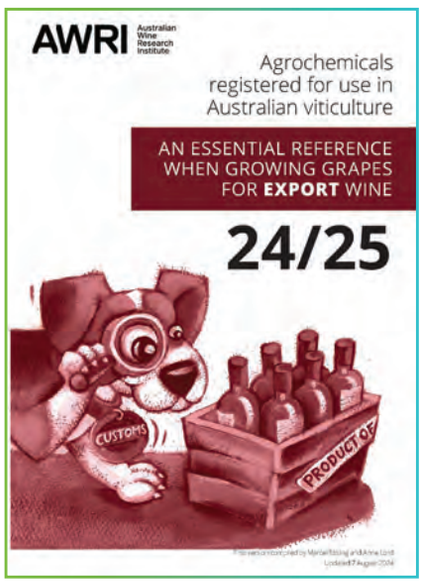
To receive alerts directly to your phone for predicted downy mildew disease events in the coming season (2024-25) you must register on the GrowCare website.

It's Free for MVW members - Register Here:
https://nj.growcare.com.au/
(Create a new account)

The new GrapeWatch system replaces the former "GrowCare Disease Alerts" email communications that were sent following rain events, which are no longer available.

If you need assistance registering contact the MVW office;
ph. 03 5021 3911

The "Dog Book" is out now



The 2024/25 edition of Agrochemicals registered for use in Australian viticulture (the "Dog Book") is now available online; https://www.awri.com.au/wp-content/uploads/agrochemical_booklet.pdf

Or via the AWRI Agrochemical App - a hard copy is also available from the MVW office.

iOS devices

Android devices

FREE SWA Workshop

Wednesday 4th September, at the Mildura Golf Resort

Most wineries now require growers to be SWA Certified to purchase their fruit - don't limit your opportunities by not having your SWA Certification!

This is a **FREE** workshop. Complimentary lunch and refreshments are provided *(this is the only free workshop this financial year, please book early as places are limited).*

Attending this training is essential to receiving SWA viticulture certification, all relevant customisable templates and resources will be provided at the workshop.

One-on-one certification support is available through MVW after completing the SWA workshop.

Contact Stephen Kelly on ph. 5021 3911 or email stephen@mvwi.com.au for more information.

Murray Valley Winegrowers

iDC Murray Valley Winegrape Industry Development Committee

Murray Valley Winegrowers MVW News & Views

AUGUST 2024

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Representing winegrape growers in the Murray Valley region within the Shires of Wentworth and Balranald, and Rural Cities of Mildura and Swan Hill.

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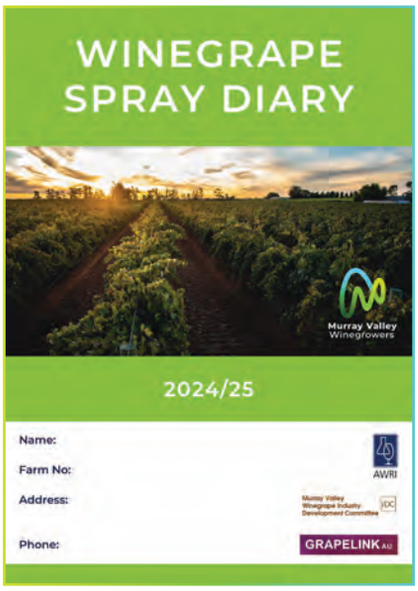
The MVW Spray Diary will be available soon

The 2024-25 Wine Grape Spray Diary will be available soon; phone the office on 03 5021 3911 or email mvw@mvwi.com.au to arrange a copy.



SuniTAFE SMART Farm Chooses to Reduce, Reuse, Recycle with Netafim Recoil Program

SuniTAFE has partnered with international company Netafim to recycle old drip lines as a way of being more sustainable and reducing its overall environmental impact.

The Netafim Recoil Program reduces the number of unwanted plastics that get left in the ground or sent to landfill by providing a simple and seamless process to retract and recycle old drip lines.

This aligns with the mission of SuniTAFE's SMART Farm campus, which is to be a leader of industry by proactively building a more efficient horticulture sector.

The operation of the SMART Farm is constantly concerned with the future, both in developing the skills of the next generation of horticultural workers, and by testing up-and-coming technologies.

In pursuit of this, Horticultural Relationship Manager Matt Wilson embraced the opportunity to utilise a sustainable alternative to a common part of the farm equipment lifecycle.

"By using the Netafim Recoil machine, we were able to roll up approximately 400 metres of poly pipe every seven minutes, which is a much easier system to use, and there's zero waste," he said.

"The SMART Farm campus decided to engage with Netafim's Recoil Program as we were able to effectively remove the old product from the farm and have it delivered to a Netafim recycling facility where the product is broken down and remanufactured to make new irrigation products.

"This avoids the need to unnecessarily dump the waste product at local council landfills where, due to being non-biodegradable, the material is just buried and not recycled."

SuniTAFE's SMART Farm campus strives to address the increasing pain points of the industry.

"The horticulture and agriculture industries are evolving rapidly," Mr Wilson said.

"By 2050, it is estimated that the global population could reach 10 billion. This means that food production may need to double and we will be required to grow more with less resources.

"Sustainable farming practices and best management practice has never been more critical. Things like recycling old irrigation products are ways in which we can ensure any growth is sustainable."

The Recoil Program first started in 2006 and has continued to grow since then.

Netafim Director of Services Peter Durand says that the willingness of farms like SuniTAFE's to collaborate with Netafim helps them to achieve their goals.

"It varies from year to year, but the Program recycles up to one thousand tonnes of drip line nationally," Mr Durand said.

"By recycling with the Recoil Program, SuniTAFE is ensuring that their used dripper line is being recycled and used in a sustainable manner. They are helping Netafim achieve their sustainability goals in the process.

"Our goal is to facilitate a program where all growers using Netafim dripper line can have a sustainable solution for this at end-of-life. We have global and local targets for utilisation of recycled material in our products and this Program helps us achieve this."

Go to https://www.netafim.com.au/irrigation-products/Recoil/Recycling/ to learn more about Netafim and the Drip Line Recycling Program.

To learn more about the SuniTAFE SMART Farm, visit the campus webpage at https://www.sunitafe.edu.au/smart-farm/

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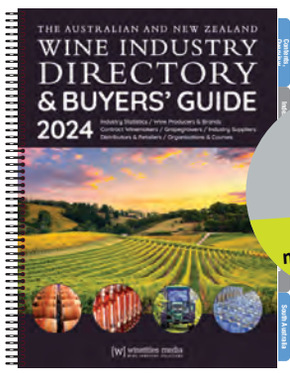

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More bang, less bucks

The 2024 grape crush for the Murray Darling-Swan Hill (MD/SH) region saw a significant increase of 38%, totaling 282,338 tonnes compared to the previous year - this figure remains 14% below the five-year average of 326,903 tonnes.

The 2024 Vintage (V24) crop was a substantial financial boost to the region, with the crush's value surging by $27.5 million (up 33%), from $83.5 million in 2023 to $110 million in 2024. This increase is attributed to the higher tonnage, despite a reduction in average value. The value of purchased grapes from independent growers rose by 17%, almost $10 million, from $55.5 million to $65.1 million.

The V24 crush, despite its increase, remains the second lowest in over a decade. Grower tonnages (purchased fruit) reached 165,000 tonnes, a 22% increase from 2023's 135,000 tonnes, while winery-grown production saw a significant rise to 118,000 tonnes from 70,000 tonnes the previous year (the 2023 national crush was the lowest in 23 years due to adverse weather and widespread disease).

Weather conditions were less of a concern for growers this year. The season began dry, ideal for pruning and vineyard preparation. Early budburst and clear spring weather alleviated most concerns of downy mildew from the previous season.

A notable challenge was significant rainfall between Christmas and Australia Day, which is unusual for the region at that time of the year - the rain reduced irrigation needs for the season.

Unfortunately, an estimated 15,000 to 20,000 tonnes of red grapes were not harvested in V24 because of market conditions, whilst some growers had already taken drastic measures to mothball/rest vineyards or use chemical sprays to halt fruit growth.

The Murray Darling and Swan Hill regions contributed 22% to the national crush, with 28% of the white crush and 16% of the red crush. Victoria's share of the regional crush rose to 58%, up from 53% in 2023. Purchased grapes accounted for 70% of Victoria's MD/SH crush, while in NSW, this figure fell from 63% to 42%.

The crush of winery-owned fruit increased by 67% compared to the very low 2023 levels, while the crush of grapes from independent growers rose by 22%. The most significant increase came from winery-grown grapes on the NSW side, up 93%.

Overall, the crush of red grapes increased by 15% (up 14kt to 102kt), and the white crush saw a substantial rise of 55% (64kt to 180kt), boosting the white grape share from 57% in 2023 to 64%. This shift was driven more by economic and market forces than seasonal factors.

Chardonnay retained its top position with 82,000 tonnes, followed by Shiraz (41,000 tonnes), Cabernet Sauvignon (25,000 tonnes), Sauvignon Blanc (24,000 tonnes), Pinot Gris (24,000 tonnes), Muscat Gordo Blanco (17,000 tonnes), Merlot (15,000 tonnes), Colombard (12,000 tonnes), and Semillon and Pinot Noir both at approximately 7,000 tonnes. Prosecco production was 6,000 tonnes, up from 4,000 tonnes the previous year.

The overall average purchase value for the region decreased by 4% from $412 per tonne to $395 per tonne, with both reds and whites experiencing similar declines. Whites averaged $55 per tonne higher than reds. Of the top ten varieties, Muscat Gordo Blanco and Pinot Gris/Grigio saw the smallest value declines (both down less than 1%), while Colombard increased by 3%.

Market Insights

Reds

- Cabernet Sauvignon: down 13% to $296/tonne
- Shiraz: down 9% to $308/tonne
- Merlot: down 6% to $317/tonne
- Pinot Noir: strong demand, $675/tonne (down 6%)

Whites

- Chardonnay: down 4% to $369/tonne
- Muscat Gordo Blanco: down 1% to $333/tonne
- Prosecco: down 2% to $648/tonne
- Sauvignon Blanc: down 5% to $544/tonne
- Semillon: down 6% to $311/tonne
- Pinot Gris/Grigio: stable at $531/tonne

Winery-grown fruit accounted for 42% of the V24 regional crush, with significant volumes of Shiraz, Merlot, and Pinot Gris/Grigio produced, exceeding the tonnes purchased from independent growers.

The national winegrape crush was estimated at 1.43 million tonnes in 2024, a 9% increase from 1.32 million tonnes in 2023, yet still 18% below the 10-year average of 1.73 million tonnes.

Price reports for the V24 MD/SH regional crush are shown on pages 6-9 of this edition of News & Views, the full report can be viewed on the MVW website: https://www.mvwi.com.au/industry/crush/

Despite these challenges, there is cautious optimism about the return of the Chinese market. However, the future remains uncertain, particularly for red grape growers. While prices for most white grapes are expected to remain stable, the market for red grapes in 2025 is still unclear.

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Vintage survey dashboard
Overview

Overview | Region snapshot | Region table | Variety table | Price dispersion

Zone/region: Murray Darling - Swan Hill | Colour: All | Variety: All | Year: 2024 | View report by: Tonnes / Value

Date last refreshed: 7/22/2024 3:39:41 AM

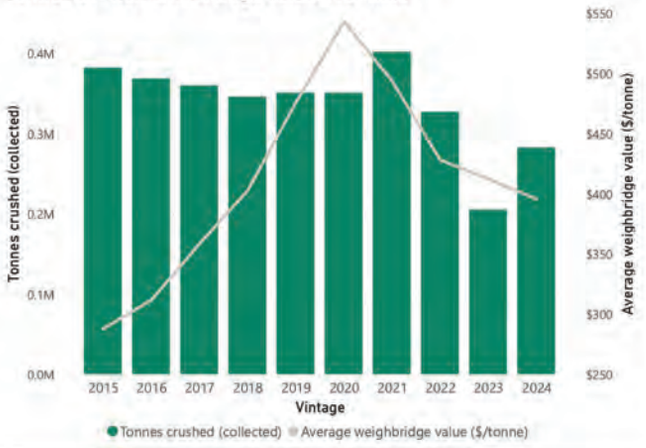
Reset filters

*Please note that the figures on this page are based on **collected** tonnes.*

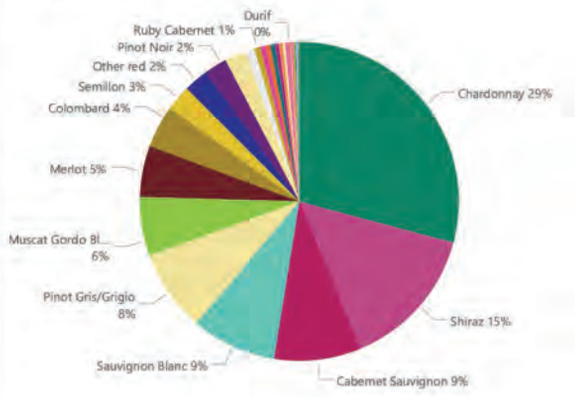
Region snapshot, Murray Darling - Swan Hill, vintage year 2024

Crush (tonnes)	Average value per tonne	Total crush value	Percentage of total tonnes
282,338	$395	$111,032,026	22.4%
Year on year change: 38% ▲	Year on year change: -4% ▼	Year on year change: 33% ▲	

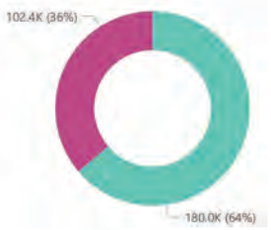
Tonnes crushed and average value over time



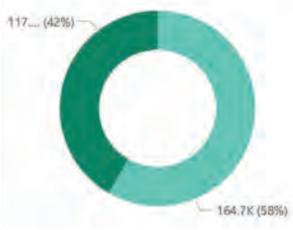
Variety profile (share by volume)



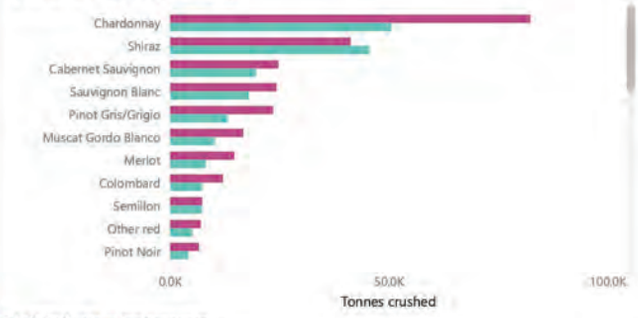
Tonnes crushed by colour

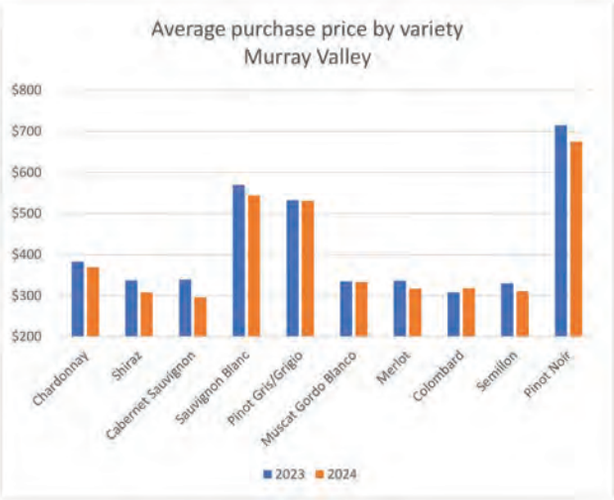


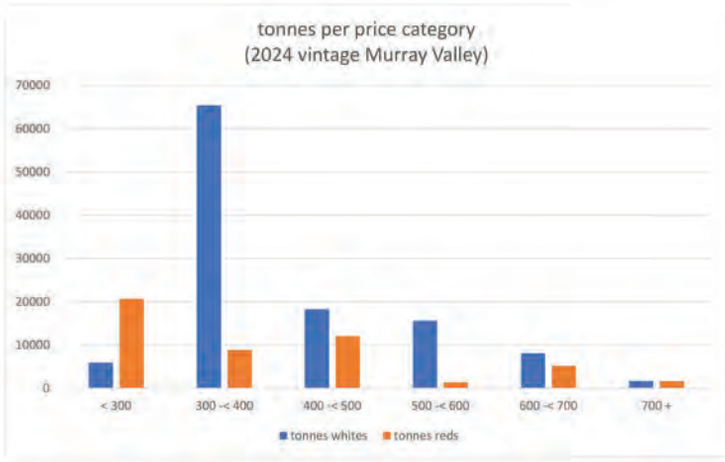
Tonnes crushed by ownership



Tonnes crushed by variety







Intake and price summary data by variety 2024 – red varieties

	Purchased Grape Summary			Winery	2024 Total			2023 Summary	
Variety	Purchased Tonnes	Value of Fruit Purchased	Average Purchase Price	Winery Grown Tonnes	Total Tonnes	Estimated Total Value	Tonnes as % of total reds	Average Purchase Price	Total Tonnes
Red									
Cabernet Sauvignon	14,498	$4,289,815	$296	10,277	24,775	$7,299,663	24%	$339	19,612
Durif	556	$215,262	$387	60	615	$234,599	1%		728
Graciano	18			103	120	$100,330	0%		7
Grenache	359	$116,058	$323	841	1,200	$388,080	1%	$404	895
Malbec	610	$312,882	$513	955	1,564	$837,038	2%	$567	1,790
Mataro/Mourvedre				83	83	$30,558	0%		
Merlot	6,440	$2,041,159	$317	8,253	14,693	$4,427,031	14%	$336	8,173
Montepulciano	21			191	212	$113,452	0%		162
Muscat à Petits Grains Rouges	130	$71,554	$552	25	154	$85,229	0%	$590	239
Nebbiolo				21	21	$4,360	0%		21
Nero d'Avola	5			105	109	$79,637	0%	$1,189	84
Petit Verdot	263			484	748	$171,120	1%		498
Pinot Noir	5,444	$3,672,335	$675	1,177	6,621	$4,411,900	6%	$715	4,239
Ruby Cabernet	127			1,520	1,647	$516,724	2%		452
Sangiovese	425	$183,984	$433	587	1,011	$438,169	1%	$400	970
Shiraz	18,803	$5,793,722	$308	22,486	41,289	$12,586,318	40%	$337	45,517
Tempranillo	72			453	524	$296,727	1%		309
Other red	1,987	$840,284	$423	4,998	6,985	$3,762,073	7%	$468	5,121
Red Total	**49,756**	**$17,745,272**	**$357**	**52,617**	**102,373**	**$35,783,007**	**100%**	**$374**	**88,815**

Note: value and average value are not displayed for varieties reported by fewer than three different wineries but are included in the calculation of the totals

Price dispersion 2024 – red varieties

Varieties	Tonnes purchased in each price range						Total tonnes purchased
	<$300	$300-<$400	$400-<$500	$500-<$600	$600-<$700	$700+	
Red							
Cabernet Sauvignon	7,362	3,397	3,739	0	0	0	14,498
Durif	0	279	277	0	0	0	556
Graciano	0	0	0	0	0	18	18
Grenache	251	0	0	0	108	0	359
Malbec	0	63	206	316	24	0	610
Merlot	2,947	566	2,927	0	0	0	6,440
Montepulciano	0	0	0	0	0	21	21
Muscat à Petits Grains Rouges	0	42	0	0	35	53	130
Nero d'Avola	0	0	0	0	0	5	5
Petit Verdot	206	0	0	58	0	0	263
Pinot Noir	0	0	0	0	4,063	1,381	5,444
Ruby Cabernet	102	0	0	0	0	25	127
Sangiovese	95	153	0	0	148	29	425
Shiraz	9,421	3,694	4,413	447	828	0	18,803
Tempranillo	0	23	0	0	0	49	72
Other red	289	632	463	562	10	30	1,987
Red Total	**20,672**	**8,849**	**12,025**	**1,383**	**5,217**	**1,610**	**49,756**

Intake and price summary data by variety 2024 – white varieties and total

	Purchased Grape Summary			Winery	2024 Total			2023 Summary	
Variety	Purchased Tonnes	Value of Fruit Purchased	Average Purchase Price	Winery Grown Tonnes	Total Tonnes	Total Value	Tonnes as % of Total Whites	Average Purchase Price	Total Tonnes
White									
Chardonnay	57,126	$21,073,357	$369	25,180	82,306	$30,714,684	46%	383	50,624
Chenin blanc	60				60	$22,618	0%		46
Colombard	7,390	$2,350,359	$318	4,699	12,089	$3,879,019	7%	308	7,355
Fiano	326	$184,365	$566	926	1,252	$606,288	1%	626	490
Gewürztraminer	117				117	$44,331	0%		123
Muscat à Petits Grains Blancs	361	$110,024	$304	1,035	1,396	$442,186	1%	348	604
Muscat Gordo Blanco	11,944	$3,982,261	$333	4,798	16,741	$5,594,855	9%	335	10,263
Pinot Gris/Grigio	10,365	$5,501,651	$531	13,177	23,542	$12,406,865	13%	532	13,164
Prosecco	4,256	$2,757,797	$648	1,736	5,993	$3,838,538	3%	661	4,473
Riesling	191	$75,030	$394	599	790	$282,033	0%	389	236
Sauvignon Blanc	17,478	$9,505,860	$544	6,850	24,328	$13,252,505	14%	570	17,946
Semillon	3,614	$1,122,594	$311	3,722	7,336	$2,275,069	4%	330	7,247
Verdelho	70			426	496	$152,211	0%		429
Vermentino	213	$94,165	$442	264	477	$160,095	0%	455	299
Viognier	223	$73,011	$327	33	256	$86,231	0%	354	325
Other white	1,221	$456,452	$374	1,566	2,788	$1,491,492	2%	344	2,622
White Total	**114,954**	**$47,375,444**	**$412**	**65,011**	**179,965**	**$75,249,019**	**100%**	**439**	**116,245**
Grand Total	**164,710**	**$65,120,715**	**$395**	**117,628**	**282,338**	**$111,032,026**		**412**	**205,061**

Note: value and average value are not displayed for varieties reported by fewer than three different wineries but are included in the calculation of the totals

Price dispersion 2024 – white varieties and total

Varieties	Tonnes purchased in each price range						Total tonnes purchased
	<$300	$300-<$400	$400-<$500	$500-<$600	$600-<$700	$700+	
White							
Chardonnay	136	46,650	10,129	201	0	10	57,126
Chenin blanc	0	60	0	0	0	0	60
Colombard	2,581	4,250	559	0	0	0	7,390
Fiano	0	0	110	102	81	33	326
Gewürztraminer	0	117	0	0	0	0	117
Muscat à Petits Grains Blancs	193	168	0	0	0	0	361
Muscat Gordo Blanco	1,499	10,394	0	0	0	51	11,944
Pinot Gris/Grigio	0	0	622	8,417	1,288	38	10,365
Prosecco	0	0	27	944	2,428	857	4,256
Riesling	0	97	94	0	0	0	191
Sauvignon Blanc	106	0	6,615	5,825	4,302	631	17,478
Semillon	1,117	2,457	0	40	0	0	3,614
Verdelho	0	70	0	0	0	0	70
Vermentino	48	0	107	49	0	9	213
Viognier	0	223	0	0	0	0	223
Other white	228	936	0	0	23	34	1,221
White Total	**5,908**	**65,421**	**18,262**	**15,578**	**8,123**	**1,662**	**114,954**
Total purchased	**26,580**	**74,270**	**30,287**	**16,961**	**13,339**	**3,273**	**164,710**

MVW Outlook Forum Coverage
$3.5m support package unveiled *By Christine Webster*

The Federal government announced a $3.5m support package for the grape and wine sector on 12 June coinciding with the 2024 MVW Forum.

Secretary of the Federal Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry Adam Fennessy represented the Federal Agriculture Minister, Murray Watt, at the conference.

He said industry consultations by the Federal, State and Territory governments had identified a need for the funding package.

"It was a direct result of advocacy from wine grape growers across regions and MVW," Mr Fennessy said.

In March, the Federal, State and Territory Agriculture Ministers established the Viticulture and Wine Sector Working Group to identify issues of concern to the industry.

The taskforce includes representatives of the Commonwealth, state and territory governments, Wine Australia and Australian Grape and Wine.

Mr Fennessy told the forum the funding package was designed to address some of the concerns highlighted by this group.

He said the $3.5m will fund a range of activities which aim to support the long-term viability of the sector.

These include providing better data for growers to make decisions and diversify into alternative products, build demand and new markets for wine both domestically and internationally, and the investigation of competition and regulatory issues.

The Federal Government is also extending support for wine producers to grow domestic sales and promote agritourism by supporting the Wine Tourism and Cellar Door Grant Program for another year.

Wine and cider businesses will share $10m in funding to help attract visitors to Australian wine regions and promote agri-tourism.

Mr Fennessy said the grape and wine industry had experienced a challenging three years after China's withdrawal from Australia's wine markets due to tariffs, which were removed in March 2024, and the impact of the Covid-19 pandemic.

Secretary of the Federal Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry Adam Fennessy PSM told grape and wine producers at the MVW forum about the Albanese Government's $3.5m support package for their sector.

He commended winemakers and grape growers on their united effort in developing a road towards recovery.

Mr Fennessy said the working group had been consulting Emeritus Professor Kym Anderson from the University of Adelaide about the difficulties being experienced by the sector.

He said the feedback received had identified many challenges including mental health factors, financial stress, and grape prices being well below the cost of production.

Mr Fennessy said the working group had also identified the need for growers to manage their production levels and diversify their grape varieties and have access to better industry data.

He said support was available for growers experiencing hard times, including financial counselling services.

Mr Fennessy said the Federal, State, and Territory Agriculture Ministers would be examining the feedback provided by the industry to the working group in July.

He told the MVW forum he had welcomed the opportunity to meet with grape and wine industry sectors firsthand during his visit to Mildura in June.

"More than 163,000 jobs exist across Australia in the grape and wine industry," he said.

"It is a very significant industry, and it plays a critical role in creating premium Australian produce, as well as economic development."

MVW Outlook Forum Coverage
ACCC urges sector to support voluntary code *By Christine Webster*

Winegrape growers are being encouraged to closely study their contracts with wineries to identify any unfair contract terms.

This was the message delivered by the Australian Competition and Consumer Commission's (ACCC) Small Business and Agriculture's general manager, David Salisbury, at the 2024 MVW Outlook Forum in June.

He said the organisation is committed to protecting the agriculture sector including the grape and wine industry.

Mr Salisbury said the ACCC's role was to make recommendations to the Federal Government on how policy could be improved.

He said this involved ensuring the Competition and Consumer Act enabled fair trading, competition, consumer protection, product safety, and infrastructure regulation.

A voluntary code of conduct for the industry was established in 2008 by the then Wine Grape Growers Australia (WGGA) and the Winemakers' Federation of Australia (WFA).

Since 2018, the nation's wine grape growers and winemakers have been represented by Australian Grape & Wine Incorporated.

The voluntary code's aim is to establish a common Australian wine grape supply contract framework and to provide a dispute resolution system to manage disagreements over price or quality assessments.

ACCC's 2019 market study

Mr Salisbury said the ACCC was committed to working with the grape and wine industry to ensure that under their industry's voluntary code of conduct, wineries provided them with fair contract terms and pricing transparency.

In 2018/ 2019, the ACCC conducted an in-depth market study of the Australian wine grape sector including its voluntary code of conduct and released its final report in September 2019.

"We found a number of issues including potential unfair contracts and a lack of price transparency," Mr Salisbury said.

"They made ten recommendations over five key areas including improving the quality assessment process, improving price transparency, including shortening payment times for grapes," he said.

The report also suggested that the grape and wine sector expand its voluntary industry code and improve winemakers' contracting practices.

Mr Salisbury said the 2019 market study found potentially unfair contract terms in agreements between winemakers and growers.

These included concerns about the right to renew clauses, lengthy payment terms, and unilateral variation clauses.

In 2020, some winemakers agreed to change their supply agreements to remove some potentially unfair terms following the ACCC investigation.

Progress achieved

Mr Salisbury said a review of practices in the industry in 2021 found that "quite promising progress", had been made.

He said the ACCC did not have the power to implement any of the recommendations it had made to the wineries and grape growers.

"It is more the case that as the competition regulator stepping in, it is part of our job into understanding markets and how they work," he said.

Mr Salisbury said examining a sector's marketplace enables the ACCC to identify issues that need to be addressed.

The 2021 review found attempts to improve conditions in the wine and grape sector had not "stalled or failed and some progress was being made".

The study found that Australian Grape and Wine Incorporated (AGWI) had made significant efforts to improve the coverage and strength of the voluntary industry code that major winemakers had signed up to.

The ACCC's Small Business and Agriculture's general manager, David Salisbury.

It said many of the ACCC's recommendations have been progressed through amendments to the code, and its increasing coverage made it a logical focus for further improvements in the future.

The ACCC said as the Code's coverage expanded and commercial norms in the inland regions continued to improve, non-signatories would find themselves increasingly out of step.

It encouraged all winemakers to sign up to and implement the practices detailed in the Code.

The review did not recommend the introduction of a mandatory industry code for wine grapes at that time.

Wine grape growers can pursue arbitration with wineries that are signatories to the voluntary code of conduct if they have identified unfair contract terms.

Mr Salisbury said if growers were concerned their agreements contained unfair contract terms, the ACCC would be interested in obtaining a copy of those agreements.

Wine grape growers are advised to contact Murray Valley Winegrowers if they have concerns about their contracts with a winery.

MVW chief executive officer Paul Derrico told growers at the forum his organisation should be the first port of call for growers seeking clarification about their agreements with wineries

Laws prohibiting unfair contract terms

In November last year, new laws prohibiting the inclusion of unfair contract terms in standard form small business and consumer contracts came into effect.

The ACCC's advice on these changes can be found at www.accc.gov.au/business/selling-products-and-services/contracts

At the MVW forum in June, the Department of Agriculture announced funding for a range of measures to assist the grape and wine industry.

This included a review of competition and regulatory issues in the wine grape sector.

The review will not be conducted by the ACCC.

MVW Outlook Forum Coverage
Growers still need support *By Christine Webster*

Australian Grape & Wine (AGW) is continuing to call for immediate action from the Federal Government to assist growers suffering from the financial impact of a global oversupply of wine and low prices.

Chief executive officer Lee McLean told the MVW Outlook Forum in June, his organisation's focus over the past 18 months had been to increase the public profile of the sector and increase awareness about its challenges.

He said the association's role was to communicate with the Federal Government about the most pressing problems being faced by the viticulture industry.

Mr McLean said urgent assistance was required to improve the financial viability of growers and wine producers, the health of regional communities, and address the mental health concerns of individual farmers.

He said AGW's role was to advocate for the industry and build relationships with politicians, government departments and the media, and also work with state and regional grower organisations.

"We aim to establish a stable regulatory environment for the industry," Mr McLean said.

"We do the work to get the regulations right and policy settings right with the ultimate aim of enabling you to do your jobs, grow grapes, make wine, and make money," he told the forum.

Pre-budget submission

AGW each year prepares a pre-budget submission to the Federal Government in collaboration with it 's members, grower groups, and other industry bodies.

In its 2024/2025 pre-budget submission AGW proposed an $86 million investment on three focus areas all targeted at rebalancing the supply and demand of wine.

The recommendations for funding were:

- $30 million in a sustainability support package for vineyard owners.
- $36 million over the forward estimates in an export market driven recovery.
- $20 million for a domestic marketing campaign to drive food and wine tourism in Australia.

Australian Grape & Wine CEO, Lee McLean

Mr McLean said it had been disappointing that the Federal Government did not include any funding for these measures in its budget, but a relief it finally announced some funding post-budget.

$3.5 million support package

Funding of $3.5 million to support the grape and wine industry was finally announced by the Federal Government on 12 June, coinciding with the 2024 MVW Outlook Forum.

Mr McLean said it was fortunate this assistance was being provided.

He said the formation of the Commonwealth, State and Territory Agriculture Ministers' Viticulture and Wine Sector Taskforce and the feedback it had received during its consultations led to the funding package.

"We are pleased with the government's swift response to feedback received during the viticulture and wine sector working group's consultations," Mr McLean said.

He said the initiatives funded, centred around boosting demand, opening new markets, providing better data, diversifying products and investigating competition, and regulatory issues.

"They represent a modest investment towards addressing medium to long-term issues in our sector." Mr McLean said.

"While these measures will support future policy and decision-making, immediate assistance for grape growers and winemakers remains critical."

Mr McLean said an urgent need still existed for solutions to the current supply and demand imbalance, red wine oversupply, and increasing economic disadvantages in regional Australia.

He hopes to see additional investment in response to the final report of the industry working group that was presented to the Federal Government, last month, reflecting the sector's $45.5 billion contribution to the economy.

At the forum, Mr McLean thanked MVW for the crucial role it played in formulating some of the thinking that was centred around issues in the viticulture industry.

"You have been a driving force in some of those discussions," he said.

MVW Outlook Forum Coverage
Global demand and prices improving for wine

By Christine Webster

Prices and demand for wine across the globe are starting to increase since China removed its punitive tariffs on the Australian industry.

Ciatti's global grape and wine broker Simone George delivered this more positive outlook of international wine market trends and intelligence since 2020, in her presentation to the 2024 MVW Outlook Forum on 12 June in Mildura.

In 2023, Australia produced just four per cent of the world's wine vintage with Italy, France and Spain alone contributing: 48 per cent, the USA: 10 per cent, Argentina: five per cent and Chile and South Africa also each producing four per cent.

Ms George said in 2023, the global wine grape crush of 244 million hectolitres was the lowest experienced since 1961.

She said a smaller level of production was not necessarily a bad thing, due to the present oversupply of wine in Australia and across the world.

"In a normal year globally, we would produce about 260 million hectolitres," Ms George told the forum.

Since Ms George's presentation, Wine Australia released its National Vintage Report 2024 that shows Australia's winegrape crush increased year-on-year by nine per cent in 2024 to an estimated 1.43 million tonnes.

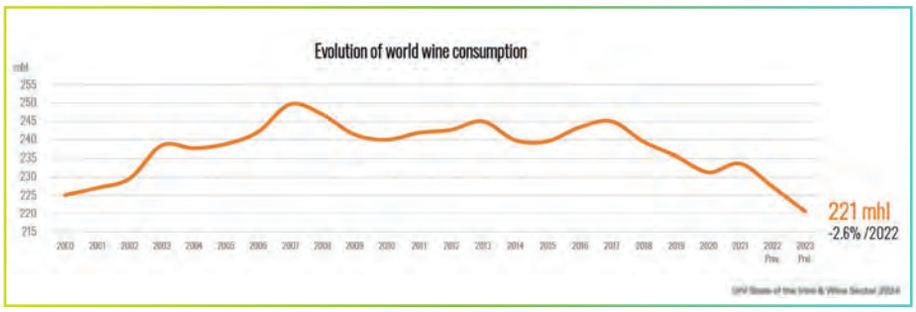
This compares to last year's vintage of 1.32 million tonnes, which was Australia's lowest crush in 23 years.

Wine Australia said despite the growth, this year's national crush was still well below the 10-year average of 1.73 million tonnes.

2023 global wine consumption drop

Ms George said the international wine consumption last year dropped by 2.6 per cent to 221 million hectolitres leading to a global excess of wine of 16 million litres.

She said consumers drank less wine last year due to a range of factors including becoming more health conscious and the rise in the cost of living and inflation.



Ms George said an increase in population, more competition from other beverages, and a decline in wine consumption in China since 2018 also caused the decrease in global demand.

She said people also drank less wine last year than during the Covid-19 pandemic, when many would have a glass after working from home.

Developing optimism

Ms George said since abolishing its impost on Australian wine, China was seeking our nation's entry level dry red, shiraz, cabernet and merlot with prices already increasing.

In April the price for Australian non-vintage dry red increased from about $0.40/litre FOB in 2023 to up to $0.60/litre FOB.

Australia's shiraz, cabernet sauvignon, and merlot also all increased in price from about $0.50 litre/FB in 2023 to up to $0.70/litre FOB.

"It is a bit of an increase from where we were and hopefully it will stay that way," Ms George said.

She said prices for chardonnay and pinot gris were stable, but mid-range and premium reds were in surplus.

The opening of China

Ms George attended the Vinexpo Asia international wine and spirits trade show in Hong Kong in May.

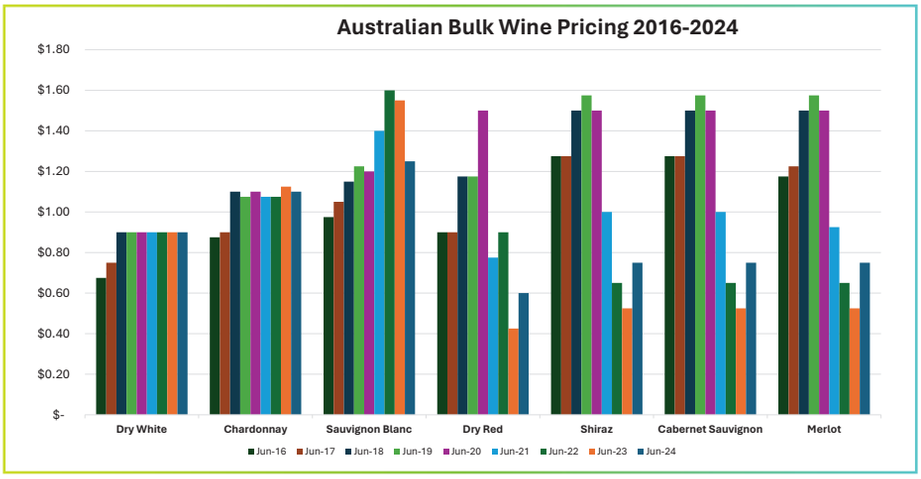
"There was a really good buzz and lots of activity," she said.

"Australia's stand was really busy and there was a lot of tasting and chit chat."

According to Wine Australia's Export Report for the 12 months to June 2024, the value of Australia's exports to mainland China grew by $392 million to reach $400 million in the last three months of the 2023/2024 financial year.

The volume of wine exported to China from Australia grew from 31 million litres to 33 million litres.

This followed the removal of the



Source: Ciatti

MVW Outlook Forum Coverage
Global demand and prices improving for wine *continued...*

By Christine Webster

duties on Australian bottled wine in late March 2024.

But Ms George said the economic conditions in China were still challenging and its younger generation were drinking less.

Australia also still faces strong competition from wine producers in France and Chile in the Chinese export market.

She said these two countries were exporting wine to China from 2020 to March 2024, when Australia was prevented from doing so.

France is China's biggest bottled wine supplier and Chile its biggest bulk supplier with a free trade agreement still in place.

But Ciatti data also shows a significant decline in the amount of wine China imported from Spain, Italy, France and Chile last year.

Ms George said hopefully China would continue to purchase Australian red wine at the rate it started in April, which would continue to have flow on benefits.

She said it was too early to predict the returns growers could receive next vintage.

Ms George said hopefully to help address Australia's wine oversupply, state and Federal governments would introduce a vine pull and exit strategy to assist growers wanting to leave the industry.

Ciatti's global grape and wine broker Simone George speaking at the 2024 MVW Outlook Forum.

MVW Outlook Forum Coverage
Collaboration is key for wine industry *By Christine Webster*

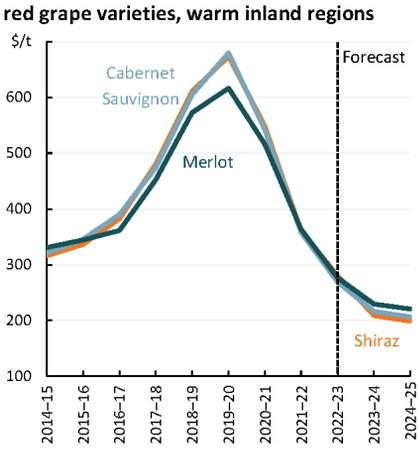
WINE Australia says the answer to addressing the industry's challenging conditions is by ensuring it works closely with growers and wine producers to empower Australian wine success.

Chief executive officer, Martin Cole, told the MVW Outlook Forum in June, the Inland Wine Regions were the engine room of the Australian wine industry and Wine Australia was committed to supporting their growers.

He said 70 per cent of levies paid to Wine Australia came from growers in the Murray Darling and Swan Hill, Riverland, and Riverina.

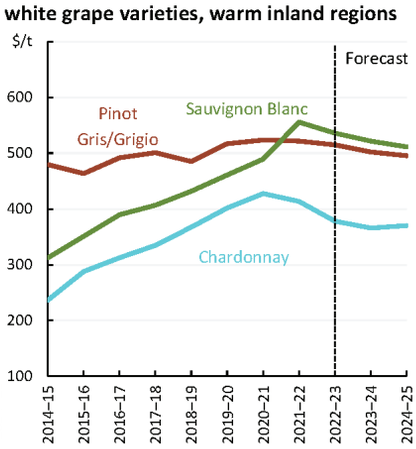
"Imagine if we didn't have the Inland Regions" he said.

Figure 8.3 Average nominal price per tonne, red grape varieties, warm inland regions



Note: Data to the right of the dotted line indicate estimates and forecasts.
Source: ABARES; Wine Australia

Figure 8.4 Average nominal price per tonne, white grape varieties, warm inland regions



Note: Data to the right of the dotted line indicate estimates and forecasts.
Source: ABARES; Wine Australia

ABARES-Agricultural-Commoditiet-March-2024-Overview-wine

MVW Outlook Forum Coverage
Collaboration is key for wine industry *By Christine Webster*

Dr Cole said without these growers, the nation's wine industry would be a completely different business.

He said this sector of the wine industry needed to be "future proofed".

Dr Cole said the levies growers paid to Wine Australia assisted the industry with its research and innovation, marketing and regulation.

He said without the involvement of Inland growers the organisation's role would be limited, as the "economies of scale" would be reduced.

Dr Cole said growers and wine producers are Wine Australia's customers and it was important for them to have input into developing solutions to improve the viability of their industry.

He said global oversupply of red wine grapes and exceptionally low bulk red wine prices were still expected for the 2025 vintage.

Dr Cole said the Inland Wine Regions Alliance and local wine grape industry organisations' strong representation of their growers was helping Wine Australia identify where assistance was needed.

He said over the past two years, since he took over the helm of Wine Australia, both his organisation and these grower bodies had made strong progress in collaboration.

Wine Australia helps half fund grower engagement officers in the Riverland and Sunraysia.

Wine Australia's CEO, Martin Cole, addressing the MVW Outlook Forum in June.

Dr Cole said this has helped the organisation attract more involvement from growers in these regions in some of its key initiatives.

"We know we have a lot to do," he said.

"But it has helped us hear loudly and clearly from growers during our consultations on the *One Grape & Wine Sector Plan* and the Agriculture Minister's taskforce."

Sector plan launched

The One Grape & Wine Sector Plan was officially launched in Adelaide earlier this month by Wine Australia and Australian Grape & Wine.

It provides a framework for collaborative and coordinated action for the sector, as well as an updated roadmap for achieving the sector's goals and vision articulated in Vision 2050.

Vision 2050 was developed by Australian Grape & Wine in collaboration with Wine Australia and was released in 2020.

It's aim, is to help the industry plan for a profitable and sustainable future over the next three decades.

Dr Cole told the MVW forum in June, the development of the Agriculture Minister's Wine Industry Taskforce enabled Commonwealth and state governments to hear firsthand from communities.

"It was good to bring the policy makers into the room with grape growers, the mayors of the towns and the community groups," he said.

"People are really doing it tough and in some of those sessions, especially those that were one on one, I also shared a few tears to be honest," Dr Cole said.

"I want to assure you I do understand how tough things are. "

China's reopening won't solve oversupply

Dr Cole said it was still too early to determine the true benefits of China's decision in March to lift its duties of up to 218 per cent on Australian wine, which it imposed in November 2020.

He said China's imported wine market was only a third of the size it was five years ago, and the consumption of wine by the Chinese had also fallen.

But Dr Cole said for Australia, no other country had replaced the volume of exports that it had sent to China.

He said in 2020, Australia had a very strong market position in China of 34 per cent share of the premium wine sector and with Wine Australia's support, it would be aiming to reclaim and maintain this.

Dr Cole said Chinese wine consumers still have a "very high regard" for Australian wine.

According to Wine Australia's 12 months to 30 June 2024 report, Australia's top five destinations by value were: • Mainland China (up $392 million to $400 million) • US (down $2 million to $357 million) • UK (down $11 million to $353 million) • Hong Kong (up $55 million to $275 million), and • Canada (down $17 million to $146 million).

In the report, Wine Australia's manager of market insights, Peter Bailey, said the growth in value had seen mainland China return to Australia's top export market by value.

"However, the volume of exports at 33 million litres, is relatively small, equating to less than five per cent of Australia's winegrape harvest in 2024," he said.

Mr Bailey said this was "unlikely to make a significant impact on the current oversupply of red winegrapes, particularly in the big volume-producing warm inland regions".

Dr Cole added that the industry needed to make wine more appealing to consumers and competitive against 'ready to drink' spirits and beer.

"We need to make wine more attractive, fun, and relevant," he said.

Dr Cole said creating a mid-strength category of wine could also be an opportunity to attract and maintain consumers.

2024 Survey Shows Deceleration of Vine Removals

The survey of the MVW grower database shows there has been a deceleration of vine removals, with the nett removal of 114 hectares of wine grapes (466 Ha in 2023); being the removal of 219 hectares, offset by 105 hectares of new plantings.

Of the areas removed and new plantings, this consisted of:

In addition to the information relating to removals and plantings, growers who participated in the survey indicated that approximately 230 hectares were mothballed/rested or the crop was chemically removed leading into vintage 2025.

MVW Survey 2024	Hectares	
Variety	**Removed**	**Planted**
Black Muscat	2	-
Cabernet Sauvignon	35	-
Chardonnay	14	25
Colombard	5	2
Fiano	-	6
Gordo	11	3
Merlot	20	-
Grenache	1	-
Petit Verdot	3	-
Pinot Gris	14	20
Pinot Noir	-	28
Ruby Cabernet	4	-
Sauvignon Blanc	-	21
Shiraz	110	-
Total	**219**	**105**

Over the past seven years, nearly 2,500 hectares of wine grapes have been removed, with the main varieties being:

- Cabernet Sauvignon 539 ha
- Chardonnay 698 ha
- Gordo 267 ha
- Merlot 252 ha
- Shiraz 718 ha

It is important that growers keep MVW informed of any updates to their vineyards and contact details so that we can communicate critical issues on time and also have accurate vineyard data in dealing with Industry planning, representing our region to Wine Australia, Australian Grape & Wine Inc., Government agencies, other Agri-political bodies, and the media.

Note: the survey is conducted by MVW on growers registered on the MVW database and does not include any vineyards that are winery-owned and operated

<-- The removals detailed here include those growers on the MVW database (excludes winery vineyards) who have physically removed their vines and growers who have exited the industry and whose vineyards are no longer producing wine grapes.

Where do fruit flies go in winter?

Do we have Queensland fruit fly in autumn and winter?

Yes, they don't take holidays and go north – you may still find them in your garden, block and orchards, but they'll be laying low.

With higher than usual fruit fly numbers in the region over the last couple of months, combined with a number of industry issues, autumn is shaping up to be a challenging time for growers.

It's important that we all manage any fruit that's left on trees or vines so it's not a breeding ground for fruit fly and we can get numbers down as much as possible leading into winter.

Qfly normally won't lay eggs after the end of April/May but they are still alive.

During the colder months, fruit flies seek shelter in evergreen trees and bushes, such as windbreak trees around the block – anything that will provide them with shelter from wind and frosts.

It is a good idea to hang traps, bait, spray in these shelter trees and watch them for any Qfly and try to reduce the numbers over the colder months.

Talking to your neighbours regarding this issue can be challenging, offering to provide traps maybe a great conversation starter.

VICTORIA State Government

The Fruit Fly Murray Valley program is supported by the Victorian Government

Are you with us?

For more information call (03) 5022 0327 or visit **fruitflymv.com.au**

FruitFly MURRAY VALLEY

Financial Benchmarking Report

Murray Valley Winegrowers has recently released its Survey Report on Crop and Financial Information. It reports on the relative financial health of winegrowing businesses in the Murray Valley region. The data obtained, while limited to seventeen volunteer growers, has provided a benchmark for the growers involved in the project, along with an average data set and case studies that can contribute to improving the financial, economic and decision-making capacity of all MVW members. The full report contains a lot of detail including three case studies and is available on the MVW website. https://www.mvwi.com.au/publications/

General insights from the analysis of the data are outlined below.

Of 17 winegrower businesses surveyed in this project:

- 10 were below 10 hectares in size,
- 6 were above 25 hectares in size - in some cases well above,
- only one grower bridged the gap between the 2 groups.

Across the survey there was a larger divide in scale and cost structure between smaller and larger winegrowers (businesses).

Smaller businesses tended to be sole operators,

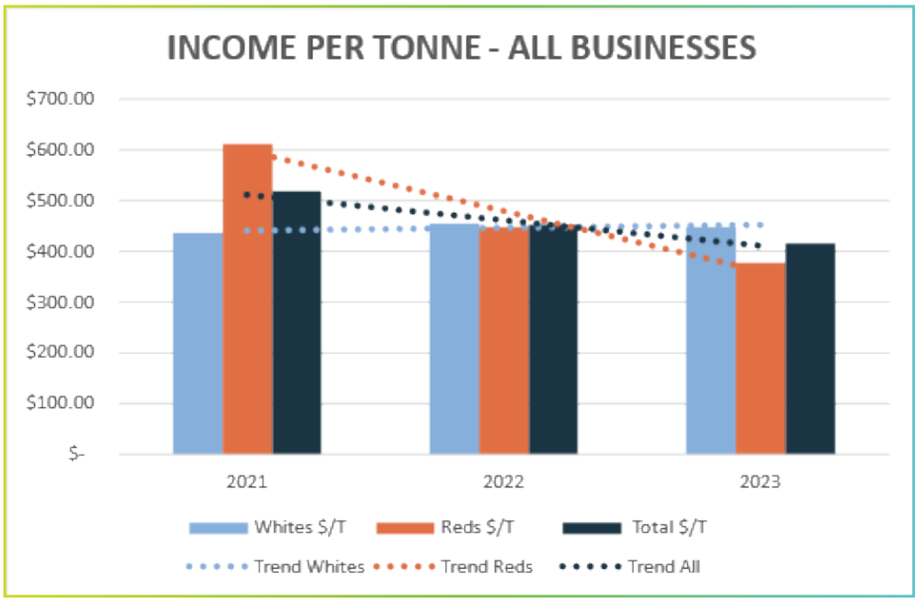
- who conducted their own pruning and,
- whose financial figures didn't necessarily reveal them to be paying themselves a wage.

Smaller businesses had a stronger percentage equity position with low debt, enabling them to absorb lower prices to a point.

Larger businesses

- utilised greater contract & farm labour and,
- tended to spend more per hectare in terms of input costs and property leases.

Prices for white grape varieties remained steady across the three years surveyed, but reds plummeted. Winery payments for reds (income per tonne) showed a downward trend each year.



There was a disparity between smaller and larger businesses, increasing significantly in 2022 then maintained in 2023.

In 2023 production was reduced by 30% in line with unseasonal weather & uncontrollable disease outbreaks.

Falling prices have greatly impacted on profit margins, bringing viability into question. Table one provides an overview of the costs and profit margins averaged across all 17 businesses in the report.

Year	2021					2022				
Production & Income:	Ha	Tonnes	$	$/ Tonne	T/Ha	Ha	Tonnes	$	$/ Tonne	T/Ha
Whites	15	521	227,497	437	33.72	15	521	236,672	455	34
Reds	19	440	269,546	612	23.06	19	412	185,066	449	22
Total	35	961	497,042	517	27.83	34	933	421,738	452	27
Costs & Profit:	**$/Ha**	**$/ Tonne**	**$**			**$/Ha**	**$/ Tonne**	**$**		
Cost (before debt & owners labour)	9,861	354	340,428			9,594	353	329,623		
Profit (before debt & owners labour)	4,537	163	156,614			2,681	99	92,115		
Debt Servicing	2,143	77	73,993			2,241	83	77,000		
Profit (before owners labour)	2,393	86	82,621			440	16	15,116		
Owners Labour	1,506	54	51,985			1,528	56	52,510		
Net Profit (incl. debt & labour)	887	32	30,636			-1,088	-40	-37,395		
Total Expenses (incl. debt & owners labour)	13,511	486	466,406			13,364	492	459,133		
Surplus/Deficit:	887	32	30,636			-1,088	-40	-37,395		

Table: 1 Production, Income, Costs and Profit average across all 17 businesses

Second small vintage in a row reveals changing fortunes of Australia's top two varieties

The Australian winegrape crush increased year-on-year by 9 per cent in 2024 to an estimated 1.43 million tonnes, according to the National Vintage Report 2024 released by Wine Australia.

Vintage 2024 follows a 23-year low crush in 2023 and, despite the growth, this year's crush is 300,000 tonnes below the 10-year average of 1.73 million tonnes (Figure 1).

It is the third crush in the past five that has been below the 10-year average, causing the five-year average to drop by over 100,000 tonnes in the past two years and pointing to an overall declining trend.

However, the reductions have been a result of seasonal factors and/or active crop reduction strategies, rather than any large-scale vineyard removals. Therefore, the potential for a large crop in future still exists, without active management of yields or vineyard restructuring.

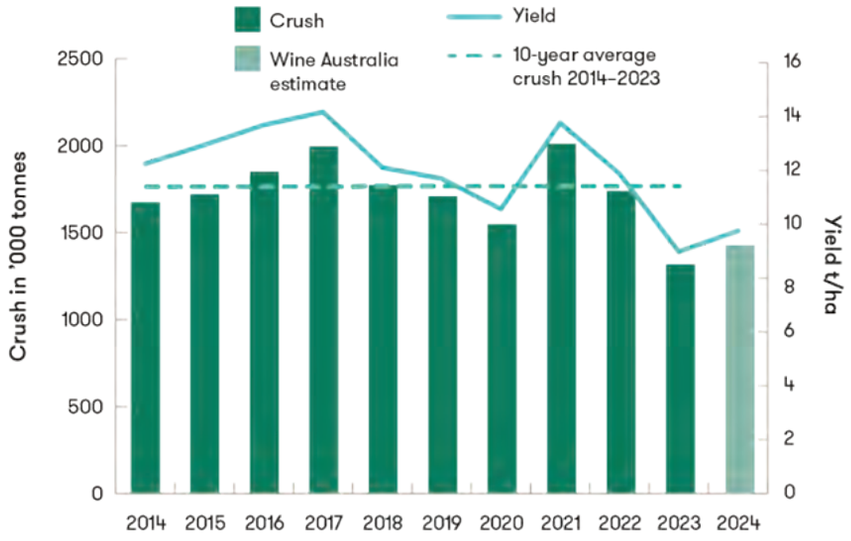


Figure - 1 Australian winegrape crush 2014–2024

Crush increase driven by whites

The increased tonnage compared with 2023 was entirely driven by white varieties, which increased by 117,338 tonnes (19 per cent) to 721,519 tonnes. Despite the 19 per cent increase, the white varieties crush was still 10 per cent below the 10-year average and the second smallest in 17 years.

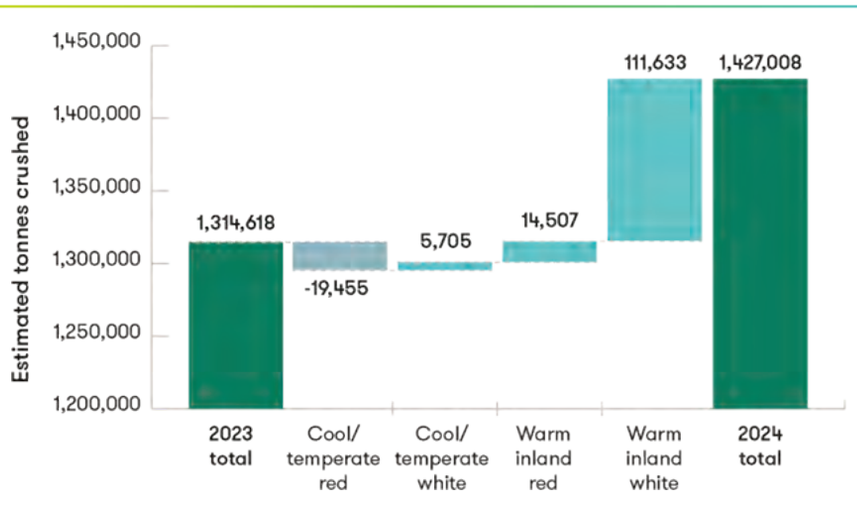


Figure 2 - Contributions to the change in crush by colour and location

The increase in whites came almost entirely from the warm inland regions, which increased by 111,633 tonnes (a 24 per cent increase), while the white crush from other regions increased by 5,705 tonnes (4 per cent).

The crush of red grapes declined by just under 5000 tonnes (1 per cent) to 705,000 tonnes, the smallest since the drought-affected 2007 vintage, and 40 per cent below its peak of 1.2 million tonnes in 2021.

The net decrease of 1 per cent in the red crush was a result of a 7 per cent decline from the cool / temperate regions , partly offset by an increase of 3 per cent from the warm inland regions (Figure 2).

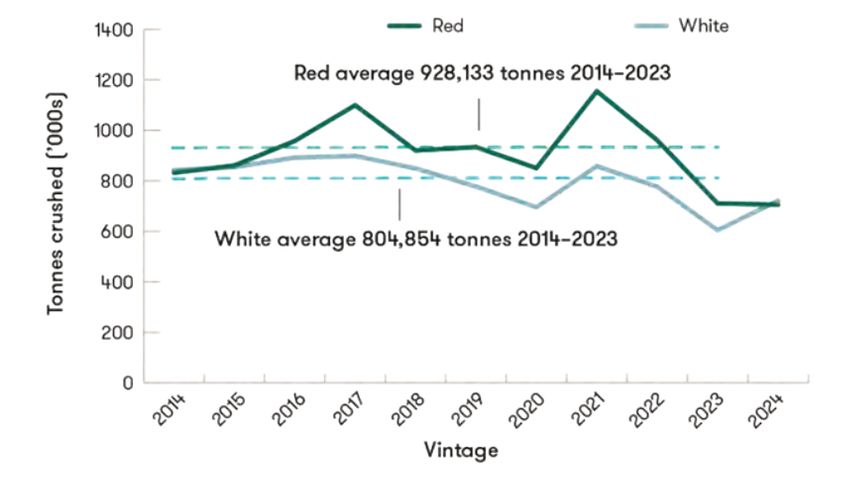


Figure 3 - Winegrape crush by colour 2014–2024

Second small vintage in a row reveals changing fortunes of Australia's top two varieties *continued...*

The different results for red and white led to whites increasing their share of the crush from 46 per cent in 2023 to 51 per cent in 2024. It was the first time since 2014 that the white crush was higher than the red crush (Figure 3).

Chardonnay returns to top spot while Shiraz drives red decline

Underpinning the increase in whites was a 31 per cent increase in Chardonnay, which was up by 79,234 tonnes to 332,643 tonnes. All other top 10 whites also increased, especially Pinot Gris/Grigio (up 27 per cent), Colombard (up 23 per cent) and Prosecco (up 22 per cent) – Figure 4.

In the case of the reds, Shiraz declined by 47,36 tonnes (14 per cent) to 297,868 tonnes, its smallest crush since 2007 and 31 per cent below its 10-year average of 430,903 tonnes. Shiraz was the only one of the top 10 reds to decline at an overall national level (Figure 5).

These changes saw Chardonnay overtake Shiraz to resume the title of largest variety by crush size that it last held in 2013, despite its crush being 8 per cent below its 10-year average of 359,925 tonnes and the third-smallest Chardonnay crush in the past 20 years.

Although seasonal factors contributed to the size and composition of the 2024 crush, the significant reduction in Shiraz specifically, across a number of regions, can be largely attributed to deliberate decisions made by grapegrowers and wine businesses, driven by low grape prices that in turn are due to significant red wine stock overhangs and reduced global demand for wine.

Average values highlight changing preferences for top varieties

The grape crush value of the 2024 vintage is estimated to be $1.01 billion, a 2 per cent increase over the previous year. This was a result of the 9 per cent increase in the tonnage being offset by an overall decrease in the average value from $642 per tonne to $613 per tonne. This decrease was a combination of lower average values for reds and whites across the warm inland regions, a small overall increase for whites across the cool regions and an increase in the share of tonnes from warm inland regions in the mix, which have a lower average value (Table 1 on page 20).

Looking at the two top varieties: the average price paid for Shiraz has fallen in both warm inland and cool / temperate regions over the past few years, but the decline has been steeper in the inland regions.

The warm inland Shiraz price has fallen from $674/t in 2020 to $249/t in 2024 – a 63 per cent decline in four years. The average value in 2024 is lower than at any time previously recorded (at least as far back as 1999).

For the cool / temperate regions over the same period, the average price paid for Shiraz has fallen 16 per cent from $1,800/t to $1,516/t, the lowest since 2017.

Conversely, the average value for Chardonnay across the warm inland

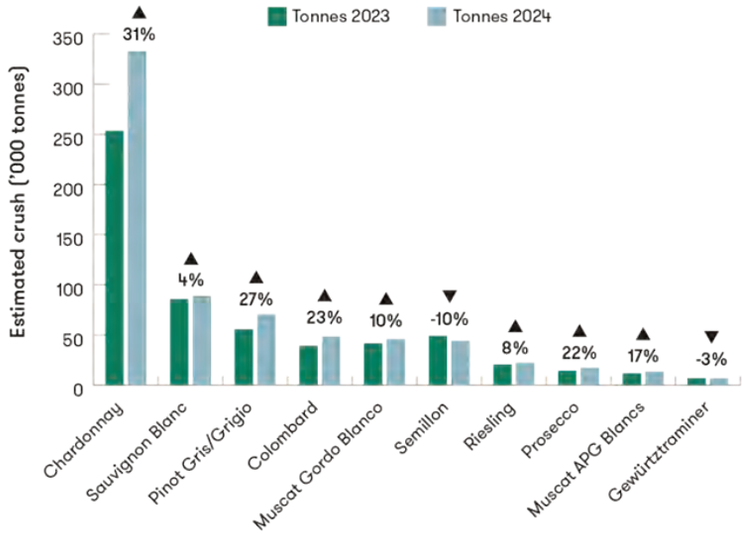


Figure - 4 Estimated crush of top 10 white varieties and year-on-year change

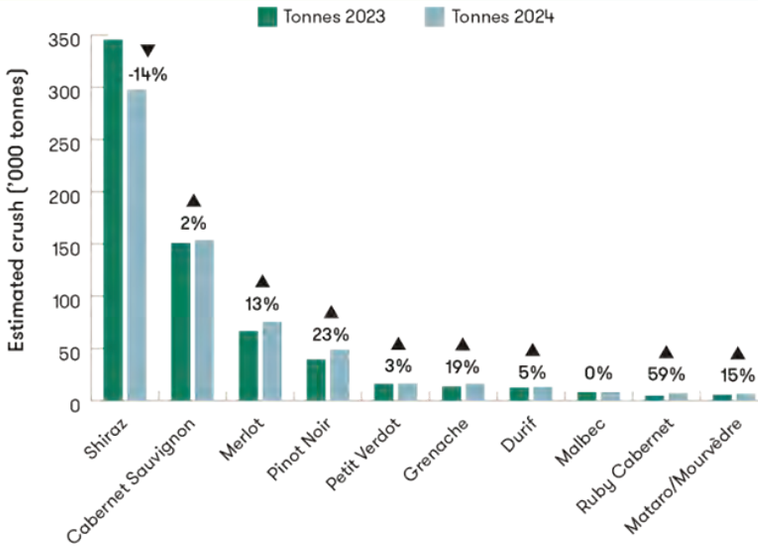


Figure - 5 Estimated crush of top 10 red varieties and year-on-year change

Second small vintage in a row reveals changing fortunes of Australia's top two varieties *continued...*

regions has decreased by 8 per cent since 2020, from $402 per tonne to $372 per tonne. Despite the decrease, it is 49 per cent higher than the Shiraz average value for the warm inland regions, compared with 36 per cent higher in 2023 and 15 per cent higher in 2022. Prior to that, Chardonnay had not had a higher average value than Shiraz for at least the previous 12 years.

Across the cool / temperate regions, Chardonnay reached a record average value of $1475 per tonne in 2024, up 6 per cent despite the higher crush and 25 per cent higher than in 2020. This was largely driven by increases in average value in Margaret River (up 6 per cent), Tasmania (up 12 per cent) and the Adelaide Hills (up 3 per cent) – the three largest cool / temperate regions for Chardonnay crush.

These results indicate stronger demand for Chardonnay than Shiraz, particularly in the warm inland regions. However, the decline in its average value in the warm inland regions despite its crush being one of the lowest in 20 years indicates that there is no current shortfall in supply.

Region		Average value ($/tonne)			Change in tonnes	Share of crush 2023	Share of crush 2024
		2023	2024	Change in average value			
Cool/ temperate	Red	1585	1583	0%	-7%	21%	18%
	White	1391	1436	3%	4%	10%	10%
	Total	**1523**	**1531**	**1%**	**-3%**	31%	28%
Warm inland	Red	304	290	-5%	3%	33%	31%
	White	399	379	-5%	24%	36%	41%
	Total	**357**	**345**	**-3%**	**14%**	69%	72%
All regions	**Total**	**642**	**613**	**-5%**	**9%**	100%	100%

Table 1 - Average value and year-on-year changes for grapes by source and colour

The National Vintage Report is available at https://www.wineaustralia.com/market-insights/national-vintage-report. Vintage survey statistics, including regional winegrape pricing, are available on Wine Australia's Vintage Survey dashboard. The Grape Price Indicators dashboard for inland regions has also been updated with the latest data.

The Grape Pricing Indicators dashboard has been updated for 2025

The free online tool that indicates market conditions for inland regions' wine grapes and indicates grape price direction for the next vintage has been updated in preparation for 2025.

Check out the Grape Price Indicators (GPI) dashboard – an easy, direct way to see what is happening with winegrape prices in the inland regions.

The dashboard is a practical, free online tool that gives a clear picture of the market conditions for wine grapes in the inland regions.

The GPI dashboard provides an up-to-date summary of the key drivers of inland winegrape prices in Australia, as well as an overall directional arrow, which indicates the forecast direction for grape prices for the major red and white varieties ahead of the next vintage.

The dashboard has been developed specifically for inland growers with funding from the Commonwealth government through its Improving Market Transparency in Perishable Agricultural Goods Industries program.

Click on the link or use the QR code below, or go to the Wine Australia website and find 'dashboards' in the Market Insights menu.

https://marketexplorer.wineaustralia.com/grape-price-indicators

scan here

Grapevine virus testing

Maintaining the health and vitality of grapevines is crucial for producing exceptional wines. One aspect often overlooked in vineyard management is the early detection of viral infections. Viruses such as Grapevine Leafroll and Grapevine Virus A (GVA), which is commonly associated with Shiraz disease, can affect vine vigour and fruit quality.

Regular diagnostic testing is essential for identifying these viral threats early. By doing so, growers and vineyard managers can implement targeted interventions to prevent the spread of virus and mitigate the impact on their vines. This proactive approach not only protects the current yield but also ensures the long-term health and productivity of the vineyard.

It is also important to test propagation material prior to planting or grafting to avoid the risk of introducing or spreading viruses. Virus testing is also a useful tool to help diagnose poor-performing grapevines and to detect and eliminate infections before they become a serious problem.

Timing is critical when it comes to sampling vines for virus testing. The ideal time to collect samples is from autumn through to spring, when symptoms of viral infections are most pronounced. This period allows for more accurate detection of viruses, ensuring that any infections are identified and addressed promptly.

If viruses are detected and need to be addressed, virus elimination techniques can be used to provide clean planting material. The elimination of viruses, through a combination of heat and chemotherapy and subsequent tissue culture, can produce virus-free plants for propagation, allowing new vineyards to be established and existing ones to be replanted.

Grapevine showing symptoms of Leafroll virus

To better serve local grape growers and vineyard managers, Affinity Labs has recently opened a new facility in Merbein. This new lab provides a regular sample collection service and works closely with Affinity Labs' Adelaide laboratory to provide virus screening services, using state-of-the-art diagnostic testing tailored to the specific needs of grape growers.

A single virus check can be used to detect the presence of a specific virus. This is a useful way to determine if a problematic virus has been eliminated.

A pre-grafting screen can be used to check rootstocks and scions for potential infection prior to top-working or propagation.

A complete virus screen looks for the most common viruses that affect grapevines. This screen is recommended for imported samples and as a general screen for rootstocks.

Affinity Labs uses advanced molecular techniques to accurately detect and diagnose viral infections, providing the vital information needed to maintain a healthy vineyard. Investing in regular diagnostic screening is critical for maintaining the quality and sustainability of the vineyard.

For more information, visit the Affinity Labs website: https://affinitylabs.com.au/virus-testing/.

Alternatively, contact the team directly at customerservice@affinitylabs.com.au

Or our local representative in the Mildura Region;

Fari Arshadi
Ph. 0437 151 010
E: farimah.arshadi@affinitylabs.com.au
7 Main Ave N., Merbein VIC 3505

Affinity Labs

Premium wine re-entering mainland China drives overall export value increase

Australian wine exports increased in value by 17 per cent to $2.2 billion in 2023–24, the highest level since the 12 months ended September 2021, and volume remained relatively steady at 619 million litres according to Wine Australia's Export Report.

The growth in value was due to a surge in exports to mainland China in the last three months of the financial year, as Australian wine re-stocked supply pipelines following the removal of the duties on Australian bottled wine in late March 2024.

Wine Australia Manager, Market Insights, Peter Bailey said that the rise in exports to mainland China is still a small fraction of the historical peaks achieved to the market.

"The surge in exports to mainland China towards the end of the financial year saw volume rise from 1 million litres to 33 million litres and value grow by $392 million to $400 million compared to last financial year," Mr Bailey said.

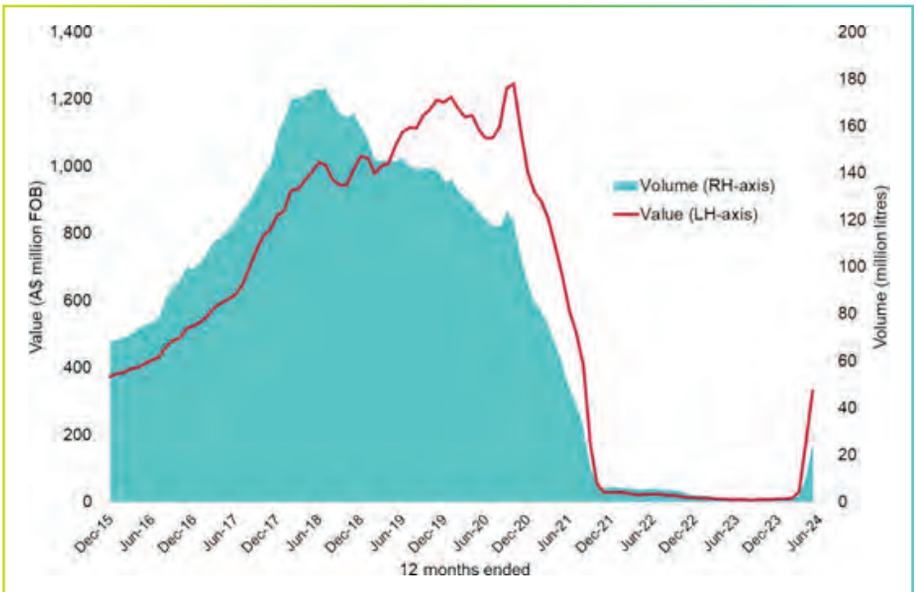
"Consumption of both domestic and imported wines in mainland China is less than a third of what it was six years ago and thus it is very unlikely that Australian wine exports will return to those previous peaks in the short to medium term."

There were 574 companies exporting to mainland China in 2023–24, up from 115 in 2022–23. Prior to the imposition of duties, there were more than 2,000 companies exporting to mainland China. In 2023–24, the top ten exporters by value to the market accounted for three–quarters of the total value and 39 per cent of the volume of exports.

Exports of wine priced at $20 or more per litre FOB, which roughly translates to 300 RMB per bottle retail, were the main driver of the value growth to mainland China, accounting for 84 per cent of the growth.

"The growth in value has seen mainland China return to the top export market by value," Mr Bailey said. "However, the volume of exports at 33 million litres, is relatively small, equating to less than five per cent of Australia's winegrape harvest in 2024 and so is unlikely to make a significant impact on the current oversupply of red winegrapes, particularly in the big volume-producing warm inland regions."

Exports to the rest of the world (excluding mainland China) declined by 4 per cent ($68 million) to $1.8 billion and volume decreased by 5 per cent (33 million litres) to 587 million litres. This is the lowest volume exported to the rest of the world in a financial year since 2003–04. The decline in volume was most significant in unpackaged exports priced under $1.50 per litre to the United States (US) and Canada (down a combined 20 million litres).



Exports of Australian wine to mainland China over time

"Global trading conditions remain very challenging with wine consumption continuing to fall in many markets around the world due to moderation trends and cost of living pressures. There are also enduring problems in shipping, with a shortage of ships globally and freight and charter rates on the rise," Mr Bailey said.

Australia is not the only country negatively impacted by these factors. Wine exports have also declined from other major wine producing countries. For example, in the 12 months ended April 2024, the volume of wine exported from Spain fell by 2 per cent, France by 7 per cent, Chile by 7 per cent, South Africa by 12 per cent, Germany by 5 per cent and New Zealand by 14 per cent.

Among varieties exported from Australia, still red wine was the main beneficiary of the growth in exports to mainland China, with total volume of red wine up 3 per cent to 330 million litres and value up 27 per cent to $1.5 billion compared to 2022–23. Cabernet Sauvignon grew in value by 41 per cent to $469 million and volume by 12 per cent to 70 million litres, with the US also contributing to the increase in exports of this variety.

For white wine, Chardonnay remained the number one variety and while volumes declined by 6 per cent to 158 million litres, value was up marginally to $307 million. The top performer for still white wine was Pinot Gris/Grigio, up 15 per cent in volume to 51 million litres and 16 per cent in value to $101 million, a record financial year result for the variety. The US was the main driver of the growth in Pinot Gris/Grigio exports.

The top five destinations by value were:

- Mainland China (up $392 million to $400 million)
- US (down $2 million to $357 million)
- UK (down $11 million to $353 million)
- Hong Kong (up $55 million to $275 million), and
- Canada (down $17 million to $146 million).

The top five destinations by volume were:

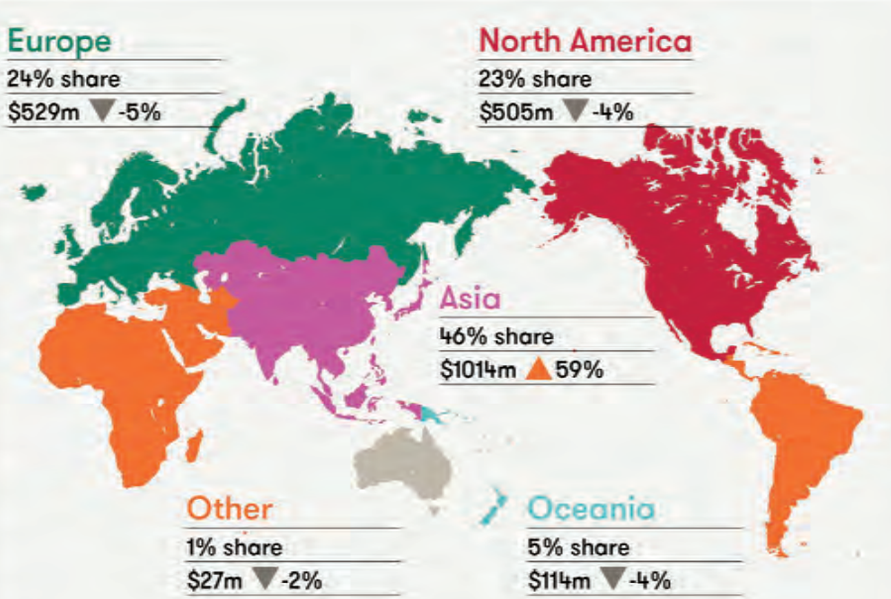
- UK (down 3 million litres to 217 million litres)
- US (down 11 million litres to 124 million litres)
- Canada (down 8 million litres to 68 million litres)
- Mainland China (up 31 million litres to 33 million litres), and
- New Zealand (down 3 million litres to 28 million litres).

Wine Australia Market Insights

Export Report

1 July 2023 to 30 June 2024

Total value	$2.19b	▲ 17%
Total volume	619m litres	▼ -0.2%
Average value	$3.53/litre	▲ 18%



Exports by price point (value)

$10.00 +	$952m	▲	53%
$7.50–$9.99	$105m	▼	-7%
$5.00–$7.49	$184m	▼	-1%
$2.50–$4.99	$502m	▲	4%
< $2.50	$447m	▼	-3%

Top 5 export destinations (value)

Mainland China	$400m	▲	++
United States	$357m	▼	-1%
United Kingdom	$353m	▼	-3%
Hong Kong	$275m	▲	25%
Canada	$146m	▼	-11%

Top 5 export varieties (litres)

Shiraz	152m	▲	4%
Chardonnay	145m	▼	-7%
Cabernet Sauvignon	90m	▲	0%
Pinot Gris/Grigio	45m	▲	9%
Merlot	40m	▼	0%

58% of wine produced is exported

115 export destinations

1,496 active exporters

18,924 different products exported

15.8 million glasses of Australian wine enjoyed overseas each day

Murray Valley
Winegrowers

Murray Valley
Winegrape Industry
Development Committee