Wine Australia

Regional Program Guidelines

2023–28

covering the period 1 July 2023 to 30 June 2028

Wine Australia

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Purpose of the Regional Program

Wine Australia's Regional Program supports regional extension, adaption and adoption of research findings to the Australian grape and wine community. The aim of the Regional Program is to help grapegrowers and winemakers adopt new tools and research findings to support a competitive Australian wine sector.

The Program offers funding for:

- the extension and adoption of research findings and related information
- demonstration trials of research findings that are structured to encourage adoption or adaption of innovation and improve regional competitiveness and sustainability.

This investment is made in activities which align with priorities identified in the [Wine Australia's 2020-2025 Strategic Plan](#), developed in consultation with the sector. From 2020 the Regional Program is also aligned with the principles and objectives outlined in [Wine Australia's Extension and Adoption Strategy 2020-25.](#)

Project Review

The refreshed Regional Program 2023-2028 will include a "stop-go-review" in June 2025 as an opportunity to align on-going projects and AOPs with Wine Australia's 2025-2030 Strategic Plan, and the still-to-be-developed One Sector Plan 2025-2030.

Multi-year projects are allowed under the refreshed Program. Initially, 2-year projects will be approved if they prove they require multiple years of execution, with the aim of reducing administration and providing project participants with a clear and guaranteed scope of works over a longer time frame for realistic delivery. Beyond the 2025 review point 3-year projects will be considered with the appropriate rationale as above.

Regional Program 'add-ons'

A number of Wine Australia funded initiatives are separate to, but aligned, closely with the Regional Program:

- AgTech adoption and demonstration vineyards, contact dave.gerner@wineaustralia.com
- Next Crop regional leadership program, contact jo.hargreaves@wineaustralia.com

Regional Program partners

There are 10 regional clusters which comprise of one or more GI regions, allowing all Australian wine regions to participate in the Regional Program.

Within each cluster, a state or regional wine association or another partner such as a state government department of primary industry, termed the Regional Program partner, coordinates the Regional Program (see Appendix A).

The role of the Regional Program partner is to ascertain the extension-related requirements of the cluster, and work with Wine Australia to develop suitable activities and then deliver the activities.

A risk-based approach determines the level of governance, administrative reporting and funding requirements for each cluster as follows in Table 1:

Table 1 Regional cluster governance structure

Region	Governance structure	Payment schedule
Tasmania Queensland	• Forward funds approved with annual payment of $25,000 per region • Funding for administration up to 15% per activity • Concepts stage is optional • Annual Operating Plan is required • EOFY annual end-of-year progress report required • Five-year final report required • Subject to initial approval in an AOP, field trials may be planned and automatically roll-over for two years initially (subject to the "stop / go / review" process) after which three-year projects can be approved.	Year 1: In full up front (in accordance with clause 3 of the Regional Funding Agreement. Year 2-4: 50% upon approval of AOP, 50% upon approval of previous year's Annual Progress Report Final Year: upon approval of the final Annual Progress Report
SA North SA Central Limestone Coast Western Australia Greater Victoria	• Forward funds approved with annual payment of $50,000 per region, subject to activities approved in AOP • Funding for administration up to 15% per activity • Concepts stage required • Annual Operating Plan required • EOFY annual final report required • Subject to initial approval in an AOP, field trials may be planned and automatically roll-over for two years initially (subject to the "stop / go / review" process) after which three-year projects can be approved.	Year 1: In full up front (in accordance with clause 3 of the Regional Funding Agreement. Year 2-4: 50% upon approval of AOP, 50% upon approval of previous year's Annual Progress Report Final Year: upon approval of the

		final Annual Progress Report
Riverland Murray Valley	• Annual funding of $125,000 per region, to be approved annually via AOP • Funding for administration up to 10% per activity • Concepts stage required • Annual Operating Plan required • EOFY annual final report required • Subject to initial approval in an AOP, field trials may be planned and automatically roll-over for two years initially (subject to the "stop / go / review" process) after which three-year projects can be approved.	Year 1: In full up front (in accordance with clause 3 of the Regional Funding Agreement. Year 2-4: 50% upon approval of AOP, 50% upon approval of previous year's Annual Progress Report Final Year: upon approval of the final Annual Progress Report
Greater NSW and ACT (incorporating Riverina as of 2023)	• Annual funding of $175,000 per region, to be approved annually via AOP • Funding for administration up to 10% per activity • Concepts stage required • Annual Operating Plan required • EOFY annual final report required • Subject to initial approval in an AOP, field trials may be planned and automatically roll-over for two years initially (subject to the "stop / go / review" process) after which three-year projects can be approved.	Year 1: In full up front (in accordance with clause 3 of the Regional Funding Agreement. Year 2-4: 50% upon approval of AOP, 50% upon approval of previous year's Annual Progress Report Final Year: upon approval of the final Annual Progress Report

Regional Program strategic plans

A five-year **strategic plan** (2023-2028) identifies the key regional issues and priorities to be addressed through regionally based extension of research. A strategic plan may be created specifically for the Regional Program or it can be adapted from an existing state or regionally based strategic plan. Once completed, the Regional Program strategic plan can be revised, as required, until 30 June 2028, provided it continues to meet the aims of the Regional Program.

Regional Program Annual Operating Plans (AOPs)

Each year the Regional Program partners are required to submit an **annual operating plan** (AOP) with a set of proposed activities (as specified in Table 1 above). These activities align with the cluster's strategic plan, support the objectives of the Regional Program and meet the criteria for investment.

Ideally, development of the extension-related activities will occur as a two-part process:

a) activity concepts: March
b) annual operating plan: May

In developing the activity concepts, the Regional Program partner considers:

- what awareness raising or practice change are you trying to encourage?
- what research findings are you going to use?
- the impact the activity will have across the region.

Submission of activity concepts in March aims to provide the Regional Program partner with early feedback on the suitability of each activity for the Regional Program, and to encourage and foster collaborative activities between regions where appropriate (i.e. an annual symposium on the same topic). The template for concepts leading to the annual operating plan is provided to Regional Program partners

Annual operating plans using a template are submitted using the template provided and aim to capture several key points including:

- the objectives of the activity
- what behaviour or practice change (benefits) are being encouraged?, where applicable
- monitoring and evaluation – how will the success of the activity be measured?, where applicable
- what research findings are being used
- identifying what will be done, i.e. Include location(s) of the seminar/conference/workshop/field day/ trial, expected number of attendees
- final outputs and how they will be communicated
- a budget explanation
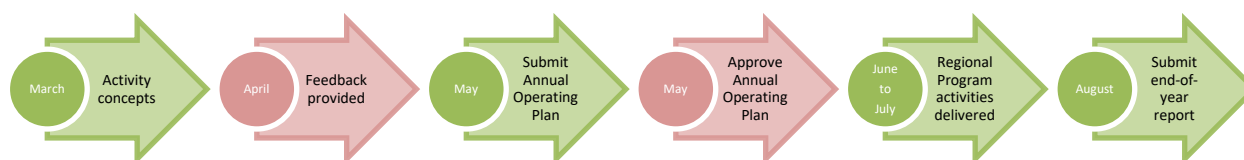- a review of ongoing alignment with the strategic plan

Submission of Regional Program documents

Concepts for each activity are encouraged and **due in March**.

Annual operating plans are due in **May** of each year. The region's Wine Australia Program Manager will work closely with each Regional Program partner to discuss draft submissions any time before this date.

Upon submission, **annual operating plans** are assessed by the Regional Program assessment group comprised of Wine Australia Program Managers and the General Manager.

A flowchart for development and delivery of annual operating plans appears below (green – Regional Program partners, red – Wine Australia). **See 2023 timeline at Appendix B[1].**

| March | Activity concepts | → | April | Feedback provided | → | May | Submit Annual Operating Plan | → | May | Approve Annual Operating Plan | → | June to July | Regional Program activities delivered | → | August | Submit end-of-year report |

How Regional Program plans are assessed

Assessment of the activities is completed in two steps.

Step one: can the activity be considered for Research and Innovation investment?

Eligible activities

Activities that can be considered for investment must be structured to encourage adoption and/or adaption of research findings.

For the purpose of the Regional Program 'activity' includes:

- in-vineyard / winery demonstration or adaption trials,
- workshops and demonstrations, and
- development of extension materials.

An activity that includes the analysis of current grape growing and winemaking practices may be eligible **as long as** the activity meets the Regional Program criteria and is structured to encourage regional adaption and/or adoption of research results. In essence, applied research is supported – so long as it involves the **practical application of existing science or knowledge** and is used to test, trial and evaluate practical problems or challenges in the region.

Not eligible

Activities that are *not* eligible for Regional Program investment include:

- the collection and collation of data for research and development purposes only, where the focus of the activity is not adaption or adoption of research findings; in this context research projects are defined as a systematic and scientific approach to discovering and quantifying new knowledge
- structural-change projects
- leadership training
- agri-political activities

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[1] Dates for 2023 are later for 2023, from 2024 all timelines are as above.

- marketing activities
- an activity that the private sector could reasonably undertake.

Step two – does the activity meet the Regional Program criteria?

If the activity is considered eligible, it will then be assessed using the following criteria:

- whether it meets the objectives of the regional cluster's five-year strategic plan (if an activity falls outside the identified priority areas, further information should be supplied outlining the cluster's need)
- the identified outcomes (including anticipated short-medium term regional benefit, value for money, key learnings and number of participants)

Regional Program budget

Administration costs as a per cent of the total activity budget are eligible for funding – see % allowances per region in Table 1. Administration includes time and other incidental costs associated with planning and delivery of the Regional Program activity. Examples of administration costs include telephone and information technology charges, and time taken by the Regional Program partner in organising activities (e.g., organisation of catering, equipment hire, publicity etc.).

Capital equipment may be eligible to purchase using Regional Program funding (e.g. instrumentation for a demonstration site). The purchase of capital must directly encourage extension, adoption or adaption of trial findings. Requests will be dealt with on a case-by-case basis.

Regional Program payment

Once the annual operating plan has been approved by Wine Australia, a letter of offer will be sent to the Regional Program partner. Payment will occur as specified in Table 1. Regional Program partners are encouraged to utilise Wine Australia's 'recipient created tax invoice' which enables a tax invoice to be automatically generated by Wine Australia to trigger payment. Otherwise, payment will be made once the tax invoice is received from the Regional Program partner.

End-of-financial-year reporting

End-of-financial-year reports are submitted in August each year to report upon activities undertaken in the previous financial year. The progress report aims to capture key learnings of activity (to be shared with other Regional Program partners), provide a record of the number of participants/distribution and provide a budget reconciliation of the activity.

Variations (within current financial year) and carry over (into next financial year)

A **variation** is requested when an amendment to the annual operating plan is needed within the current financial year. This could include:

- the scope or budget (over $5,000) of an activity has significantly changed
- a new activity is needed to replace a previously approved activity which can no longer be run

A variation should be discussed as soon as is practical, with requests sent to the appropriate Wine Australia Program Manager. Best endeavours will be made by Wine Australia Program Managers to accommodate any variations in a timely manner. Any minor changes to activity scope or budget will be captured in the end-of-year Regional Program report.

As a commitment to delivering value to grape growers and producers in a timely manner, Regional Program Partners may only retain funding at the end of a financial year for expenditure in the following financial year if you make a request in writing (accompanied by reasons) to Wine Australia and approval is provided in writing of that request (which approval may be reasonably withheld). As above projects that have multiple year timeframes are permitted, agreed in advance with review of AOP / Strategic Plan with Wine Australia's Program Manager

Information sharing

Information-sharing is a key part of the Regional Program, as is the continuous improvement of the Regional Program. To support this, we will host at least one workshop for all Regional Program partners. Each partner will be asked to provide verbal updates on their activities, share their expertise and learnings and thoughts on how the program could better meet the sectoral and regional needs.

To facilitate whole-of-industry information-sharing, any materials produced (such as training materials, strategic plans and trial results) through the Regional Program may be published on the Wine Australia website or used in other extension events to ensure maximum industry uptake. We encourage submission of materials and other outputs produced during the program to be shared on Wine Australia's Regional Program page, or via links to your own websites, when practical. **If you are looking for outputs from other regions this is a good place to start**
https://www.wineaustralia.com/research/in-practice/regional-program

Appendix A Regional Program clusters, Partners and Program Managers

Regional cluster	Geographical indications	Regional Program partner	Contact	Investment per annum	Program Manager
Tasmania	Tasmania	Wine Tasmania	Paul Smart	$25K	Sharon Harvey
Greater NSW and ACT	All regions in NSW and ACT including Riverina	NSW Wine Industry Association	Mark Bourne Matthew Jessop	$175K	Alex Sas
Queensland	All regions in Queensland	Queensland Wine Industry Association	Ann Burke	$25K	Jo Hargreaves
Western Australia	All regions in Western Australia	Wines of Western Australia	Richard Fennessy	$50K	Jo Hargreaves
SA North	Barossa Valley, Clare Valley, Eden Valley, Adelaide Plains, Southern Flinders Ranges	Barossa Australia	Nicki Robins	$50K	Paul Smith
Limestone Coast	Coonawarra, Padthaway, Wrattonbully, Mount Benson, Robe, Mt Gambier	Limestone Coast Grape & Wine Council	Ulrich Grey-Smith	$50K	Paul Smith
SA Central	Langhorne Creek, McLaren Vale, Adelaide Hills, Southern Fleurieu, Currency Creek, Kangaroo Island	Langhorne Creek Grape & Wine Inc.	Lian Jaensch	$50K	Sharon Harvey
Greater Victoria	All regions in Victoria excluding Murray Darling and Swan Hill	Wine Victoria Inc.	Stephanie Duboudin	$50K	Sharon Harvey
Riverland	Riverland	Riverland Wine	Charles Matheson	$125K	Alex Sas
Murray Valley	Murray Darling and Swan Hill	Murray Valley Winegrowers Inc.	Stuart Putland	$125K	Alex Sas

Appendix B Timeline for 2023

Activities highlighted in green indicate important action items for Regional Program Partners

2023	Regional Program
Mid-February	Regional Program strategic plan and consultation sessions held by regional associations
10 May	Draft contracts and draft revised Regional Program Guidelines provided to Regional Program Partners for review
By 19 May	Regional Program partners submit to Wine Australia their 2023-24 AOP Concepts (high-level)
May 26	Wine Australia reviews Concepts
June 2	Feedback on 2023-24 Concepts provided from Wine Australia to Regional Program partners
June 7	Regional Program Partners annual workshop – concepts conversation
June 16	All Regional Program partners submit their 2023-24 Regional Program AOP to Wine Australia
by 23 June	AOPs assessed by Wine Australia and feedback provided to Regional Program partners, changes made as required
By June 28	Wine Australia contracts with Regional Program partners for 2023-24 activities
1 July	**Regional Program 2023-24 commences**
September	Regional Program Partners annual workshop – progress update TBC