



Margaret River Wine Region Sustainability Report 2023



We grow and make our wines on the land of the Wadandi people, the traditional custodians of the Margaret River Region. We pay our respects to their Elders past and present.



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We proudly present the Margaret River Wine Region's Inaugural Sustainability Report.

Margaret River is a spectacular coastal wine region in the secluded south-west of Australia. Its ancient granite landforms are amongst the oldest on the planet, and ironstone gravels abound. Here, the powerful Indian and Southern Oceans meet, engulfing this land with the energy of fresh, salt-kissed air that has flown clean and untouched for thousands of kilometres. The pristine country, with its abundant forest, caves and endemic flora and fauna, has been cared for by traditional owners, the Wadandi (Saltwater) People, for over 50,000 years to become one of Earth's most important biodiversity hotspots.

The south-west of Australia is one of the original 25 internationally recognised 'Biodiversity Hotspots' and the first one identified in Australia (there are currently 36 international Hotspots and two in Australia).

The region is also a vigneron and winemaker's paradise, gifted with the natural potential to grow some of the new world's finest, revered wines.

We have made a conscious commitment to continuous improvement and to leave our land in better condition for future generations.

The Margaret River Wine Region Sustainability Plan was established out of a conviction to fulfil custodial responsibilities towards the region's exceptional environment, recognising the importance of sustaining and protecting its rare biodiversity. The plan identifies key initiatives and measures, including environmental health and resilience, social responsibility, waste reduction and climate action. A major initiative of the Association is onboarding its members into the Sustainable Winegrowing Australia program and working with them to achieve certification.

This report summarises where we are here and now in 2023, and the opportunities that lie ahead.

Amanda Whiteland, CEO
Margaret River Wine Association

Our Region at a Glance



Total Area



Remnant Vegetation (46.4%)



Area under vine (2.7%)



Certified Sustainable Winegrowing Australia (39% of total area under vine)



Certified Organic & Biodynamic (7.6% of total area under vine)



68% Wine Producers crush less than 100 tonnes of Margaret River GI fruit



Sustainability & Wine



Sustainability refers to the capacity of a system, whether it be an ecosystem, community, or business, to endure and thrive over the long term while maintaining a balance among environmental, social, and economic considerations. It involves responsible resource management, minimising negative impacts on the environment, fostering social equity, and ensuring economic viability. Sustainable practices aim to meet the needs of the present without compromising that of future generations. In terms of wine this means employing viticultural and winemaking practices that prioritise environmental, social, and economic sustainability by examining our operations including energy and water use, waste management, use of fertilisers and chemicals, and can include practices such as organic or biodynamic farming. The goal is to produce high-quality wines while minimising our ecological footprint.



SUSTAINABLE WINEGROWING AUSTRALIA

The Margaret River Wine Association is progressing towards an ambitious goal to achieve 100% of members compliant to the national Sustainable Winegrowing Australia program (and 50% certified) by December 2025.

Sustainable Winegrowing Australia is Australia's national program for grape growers and winemakers to demonstrate and continuously improve their sustainable practices in the vineyard and winery through the environmental, social and economic aspects of their businesses. The voluntary program takes a holistic approach to managing, supporting, and promoting sustainability and is modelled on global best practices and aligned to the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals, with progress towards these monitored annually.

This program is an obvious extension of the natural environmental advantage of Margaret River as one of the world's most pristine fine wine producing regions and complements the Association's ongoing sustainability work.

Search members at www.sustainablewinegrowing.com.au

2023 HIGHLIGHTS

- **64%** of vineyards and **57%** of wineries in Margaret River have taken action to plan, monitor and **reduce water use**.
- **66%** of vineyard members have a documented **biodiversity management program** which includes strategies and practices to protect and improve existing biodiversity areas.
- **26%** of vineyards have participated in a **regional biodiversity program** in the last 12 months.
- **95%** of winery members and **83%** of vineyard members **consider waste management** in selection of inputs, packaging size, quantity, weight, the potential to reuse or recycle and the residual waste product when purchasing products.
- For **66%** of winery members and **53%** of vineyards **energy and fuel efficiency is a key** criterion in selection and/or design of new premises, vehicles, machinery, and equipment; only those with the highest efficiency are purchased.
- In the past 12 months **33% vineyards have trialed and/or replaced agrochemicals** with products or processes that have a lower environmental impact
- **59%** of winery members are **using renewable energy** from the grid or onsite solar generation.



2023 SUSTAINABLE WINEGROWING AUSTRALIA REPORT CARD

Vineyard Certification	2019/ 20	2020/ 21	2021/ 22	2022/ 23
Total Vineyards Certified	13	14	16	52
Vineyard Area (ha)	711	878	999	2,269
% of region hectares	12%	15%	17%	39%

- **+225%** increase in Certified Vineyards
- **+127%** increase in Certified Vineyard Area (hectares)

Vineyard Membership	2019/ 20	2020/ 21	2021/ 22	2022/ 23
Total Vineyard Members	35	45	64	73
Vineyard Area (ha)	1,662	1,817	2,422	3,096
% of region hectares	28%	31%	41%	53%

- **+14%** increase in Vineyard Membership
- **+28%** increase in Vineyard Member Area (hectares)

Winery Certification	2019/ 20	2020/ 21	2021/ 22	2022/ 23
Total Certified Members	5	5	6	13
Certified Wineries Tonnes crushed	7,547	6,760	11,162	15,814

- **+117%** increase in Certified Wineries
- **+42%** increase in Certified Wineries Tonnes

Winery & Wine Business Membership	2019/ 20	2020/ 21	2021/ 22	2022/ 23
Total Wine Business Members	0	0	1	4
Total Winery Members	7	12	17	22
Member Tonnes Crushed	11,793	13,155	23,532	32,007

- **+29%** increase in Winery Membership
- **+36%** increase in Winery Tonnes



Certified Wineries and Wine Businesses

Certified Wineries and Wine Businesses	Year Joined
Cape Mentelle	2010
Credaro Winemaking	2022
Gant and Co	2022
Howard Park Winery	2010
Juniper Estate Winery	2020
La Kooki Wines	2021
Leeuwin Estate Winery	2011
Naturaliste Vintners	2010
Oates Ends	2020
Stella Bella Winery	2022
Thompson Estate	2021
Treasury Wine Estates - Devil's Lair	2010
Xanadu Wines	2011
Yelverton Winery	2022



Certified Vineyards	Year Joined
467 Twenty Four Rd (Gant & Co)	2021
Alan Rock	2020
Altair Estate	2021
Bantry Bay	2012
Bramley	2022
Brash Vineyard	2020
Brushwood Brook	2020
Calneggia Family Vineyards	2009
Cape Mentelle Vineyards Ltd	2010
Celestial Bay	2021
Churchview Estate	2022
Corymbia Calgardup Vineyard	2022
Credaro Family Estate	2021
Domaine Naturaliste Wines	2021
Forrest Vineyard	2020
Georgettes Vineyard	2020
Grace Farm	2022
Gunyulagup Estate	2022
Harmony Forest Vineyard	2020
Howard Park - Margaret river Vyds	2010
Jindawarra Vineyard	2021
Juniper Estate	2017
Kaard Wines	2020
Karridale Vineyards (Mandoon)	2020
Leeuwin Estate	2011
Maggies Farm	2020
Montgomery Vineyard	2021
Oakfield Estate	2020
Paganin Vineyard	2022
Passel Estate	2020
Peccavi Wines	2020
Ridge Farm	2020

Certified Vineyards	Year Joined
Rivenleigh Vineyard	2020
Roje Estates [Firetail]	2021
Rosa Park Vineyard	2014
Saracen Estates	2020
Sewards Vineyard	2013
Sirens Vineyard	2021
St Johns Vineyards - Yelverton	2022
Starcastle Investments - Ironstone, Yallingup, Bridgelands	2009
Stella Bella Wines	2022
The Gravels Vineyard	2020
Thompson Estate	2021
Timber Creek Vineyards	2013
TWE - Devils Lair Vineyard	2010
Victory Point Wines	2010
Voyager Estate	2010
Wayfinder Vineyard	2022
Were Estate	2012
Wildberry Springs	2022
Woodman Vineyard	2012
Xanadu Wines	2011



Adopting Organic and Biodynamic Practices



A growing number of vineyards are embracing reduced chemical use, and more regulated organic and biodynamic practices to maximise vine health and minimise harm to the surrounding ecology while returning good inputs such as compost back to the land.

Currently, 442 hectares or 7.6% of the region's vineyards are certified organic or biodynamic.



CERTIFIED ORGANIC OR BIODYNAMIC PRODUCERS

These producers in the Margaret River Wine Region are fully certified as biodynamic or organic through every step of the wine production process, from vineyard to bottle, and their wines are often labelled as such.

Producer	Organic/ Biodynamic	Cert Agency	Cert No	Grapes	Wine
Blind Corner	Biodynamic	ACO	12066	Yes	Yes
Burnside Organic Farm	Biodynamic	Demeter	743	Yes	Yes
Cullen Wines	Biodynamic	ACO	10864	Yes	Yes
Rosily Vineyard	Organic	ACO	12122	Yes	Yes
Settlers Ridge	Organic	SXC	6115P	Yes	Yes
Stormflower Vineyard	Organic	SXC	19021	Yes	Yes

These producers have a component of their grape growing and winemaking process certified as biodynamic or organic.

They may still be converting a portion of their vineyards to organic, producing some wines from non-certified vineyards or making wine in a non-certified winery.



Producer	Organic/ Biodynamic	Cert Agency	Cert No	Grapes	Wine
Arimia	Organic	ACO	12749	Yes	Yes [#]
Churchview Estate	Organic	ACO	12758	Yes	Yes [#]
House of Cards	Organic	ACO	12799	Yes	Yes [#]
Marri Wood Park	Biodynamic	Demeter	735	Yes	No
McHenry Hohnen	Biodynamic	ACO	12956	[Yes]	Yes [#]
Revelation Wine	Organic	SXC	20027	Yes	No
Snake & Herring	Organic	SXC	22024	[Yes]	No
Voyager Estate	Organic	ACO	12507	Yes	Yes [#]
Walsh & Sons	Biodynamic	Demeter	777	Yes	No
Wayfinder	Organic	ACO	13155	Yes	No
Windows Estate	Organic	SXC	20109	Yes	Yes [#]
Witchcliffe Ecovillage	Organic	NASAA	6390	Yes	No
Windance Estate	Biodynamic	Demeter	799	[Yes]	No
Woodlands Wines	Organic	NASAA	6392	[Yes]	Yes [#]

[] indicates that not all vineyards owned or contracted by this producer are under certification

indicates that not all wines currently for sale by this producer are made with certified organic or biodynamic grapes

Source: www.margaretriverorganicwine.com

PHYLLOXERA-FREE

Margaret River is one of the few wine regions in the world able to grow vines on their own root system, without the need for rootstock. The absence of the vine pest phylloxera has meant most vineyards have been grown from cuttings taken from high-quality, existing vineyards. This has allowed for the selection and propagation of very high-quality heritage clones of each grape variety.

Margaret River Wine Association Actions and Highlights



REVEGETATION AT THE MARGARET RIVER RIVERMOUTH

In partnership with Nature Conservation Margaret River Region and the Shire of Augusta Margaret River, the MRWA held another Revegetation Day at the Margaret River rivermouth, with over 60 volunteers working on the degraded areas by removing weeds, managing access, stabilising dunes and replanting critical native species.

The Rivermouth foreshore is an incredibly vital yet fragile ecosystem, made even more so due to its popularity as a cherished surf and swim spot in the summer months. By blocking unapproved access trails, removing onion weeds, planting native seedlings, and covering those newly planted cuttings with a protective layer of brush, we were able to ensure this precious area will continue to thrive for generations to come.

ECOVINEYARDS PROGRAM

Margaret River is a participating region in the national EcoVineyards program, which supports actions to enhance soil health and increase functional biodiversity in vineyards.

Roje Estate, Stormflower Vineyard, Wayfinder and Juniper Estate are all participating EcoGrower trial sites. [Read more.](#)



INAUGURAL SMOKING CEREMONY & WELCOME TO COUNTRY FOR SEASONAL WORKERS

The inaugural Pre-Vintage Welcome to Country and Smoking Ceremony was held on 23 February in Pioneer Park in Cowaramup by the [Margaret River Wine Association \(MRWA\)](#) and [Margaret River Busselton Tourism Association \(MRBTA\)](#). The gathering centred around Dr Wayne Webb and Iszac Webb welcoming those arriving in the area to help with the 2023 vintage and sharing with them the beautiful culture and history of the traditional custodians, the Wadandi (Saltwater) people. [Read more.](#)

2023 VITICULTURE AND SUSTAINABILITY EXCELLENCE AWARD

The Margaret River Wine Association has awarded a Viticulture Excellence Award since 2007. In 2021, it expanded to the Viticulture and Sustainability Excellence Award. This year it was awarded to Stephen Kirby, recognising many of the processes at Howard Park, including their composting program of grape marc, which is added to the vineyard and reduces the need for irrigation water and lowers energy consumption. Howard Park has also recently upgraded their irrigation automation, allowing them greater flexibility to irrigate at night, with lower evaporation and decreasing energy costs.



2023 JOHN TATE MEMORIAL INNOVATION AWARD

This year Georgina Harrison of Kaloorup Vineyard was honoured with the second John Tate Memorial Innovation Award presented by Miles From Nowhere. Georgina's award recognises her innovative work and trials at several regional vineyards which use copper mesh on the grapevines as an effective barrier against snails. She will receive a \$5,000 bursary to further her innovation studies and encourage further innovative practices.

BIOSECURITY

We are very keen on biosecurity! When you visit our region's cellar doors, you will notice signs that ask that you stay out of the vineyards. This will prevent the spread of pests or diseases that may be on your shoes or clothing entering our vineyard. Please admire our vines from a safe distance.

SUSTAINABLE ROUNDTABLE MEMBERSHIP

Sustainable Roundtable is a global platform to advance sustainability across the wine industry, from production to retail. The Margaret River Wine Association joined the [Sustainable Wine Roundtable \(SWR\)](#) as an Associate Member in July 2023.

A Snapshot of Our Wine Community's Actions



CARBON NEUTRAL AND CARBON POSITIVE

Cullen Wines has been certified carbon neutral since 2007 and carbon positive since 2019, where their soils sequester and hold more carbon than their business emits.

INTERNATIONAL WINERIES FOR CLIMATE ACTION (IWCA)

In September 2020, Cullen joined the IWCA, followed by Voyager Estate in December 2021. Both now hold Silver Membership status and are committed to decarbonising and taking action to reduce greenhouse gas emissions.

FRIENDS OF THE CAPE TO CAPE TRACK

Six wineries in the region, Cape Mentelle, Deep Woods Estate, Devils Lair, Vasse Felix, Voyager Estate and Xanadu, have adopted a section of the world-famous Cape-to-Cape track through the “Friend of the Cape to Cape Track’ program.

Throughout the year, teams from these wineries regularly perform track maintenance on their ‘adopted’ sections of the track, including light pruning, minor erosion control, bush rehabilitation, reporting any weed infestations and litter collection.



ELECTRIC VEHICLES

To further their commitment towards the environment, Cape Mentelle, Swings & Roundabouts Yallingup, and Voyager Estate have installed EV charging stations. To see all stations in the region, [click here](#).

Wayfinder Vineyards is doing its best to go electric where it can and has started in the vineyards using electric buggies, which then get plugged in at the end of the day to recharge.

SOLAR PANELS

To reduce power consumption, many wineries in the region, including Cape Mentelle, Fraser Gallop Estate, Voyager Estate, Wayfinder and Xanadu have installed solar panels and converted all lights to LED.

Stormflower Vineyard operates all their viticulture and winemaking practices off-grid.

WATER MANAGEMENT

Cape Mentelle recycles 100% of the water they use in the winery thanks to a fully self-contained rain and surface water treatment system considered a model in our region.

Stormflower Vineyard use tertiary treatment of their wastewater, allowing solid separation through sedimentation processes; the liquid is pH adjusted and decanted off solids; aeration treatment follows to reduce biological oxygen demand (BOD) after which the wastewater is passed through a series of reed beds before being irrigated onto pasture.

See our Waste Water case study [here](#).

COMPOSTING

Many growers realise the benefits of returning organic matter to the soils via the composting of grape marc, a by-product of wine production. At McHenry Hohnen, they use compost, alongside other biodynamic practices, to increase soil and vine health. Of those who are members of Sustainable Winegrowing Australia, 22% are using compost across their vineyards.



REVEGETATION AND CONSERVATION

Intending to reclaim almost 4 acres of bushland, Wayfinder Vineyards have planted over 50,000 trees, shrubs and grasses to increase the biodiversity of their property. Voyager Estate has planted nearly 60,000 trees and shrubs to rehabilitate cleared farmland. See our case study [here](#).

Howard Park has a partnership with Carbon Positive Australia whereby every bottle of their Arbor Novae range that is sold they donate \$1.50 to Carbon Positive Australia to support local tree planting and landscape restoration.

In September Margaret River Vintners held their inaugural weeding day which focussed on clearing the invasive Sydney Golden Wattle and other woody weeds from the ecological community known as Busselton Ironstone community which, is within their site boundaries and contains critically endangered ecology.

[Passel Estate Possum Conservation](#) commenced after the fires of 2011. The owners of Passel Estate provided a family (or Passel) of Western Ringtail Possums with boxes in a sanctuary of their giant peppermint trees. They have since installed two soft-release enclosures alongside the creekline, to enable the successful rehabilitation of more Western Ringtail Possums at the estate, working alongside local conservation groups and guided by the code of practice for wildlife rehabilitation in Western Australia.

Many [winemakers and grape growers](#) like [Clairault Streicker](#) work with [Nature Conservation Margaret River](#) to control the dense arum lily monocultures to safeguard the region's biodiversity. The Arum lily is an incredibly invasive weed in our region, and without control would continue to spread and aggressively outcompete native plants and replaces beautiful, diverse plant communities.



VINEYARD NURSERIES

Howard Park has established a nursery at their Leston property to ensure the genetic integrity of the vine rootlings. Planted in 2014, it produces approximately 40,000 rootlings annually, all sourced from vineyard blocks with outstanding performance records.

GROWER ENGAGEMENT

Some of the larger companies in the region have been leading the charge in encouraging their growers to become certified, from offering support through the certification process to bonus payments for certified fruit. In vintage 2023 100% of growers contracted by Devil's Lair were certified sustainable by Sustainable Winegrowing Australia, they were the only wine producer within the larger Treasury Wine Estates group to achieve this.

SHEEP

Sheep rotate through many vineyards in Margaret River from June to September to control the weeds and grasses, which saves on tractor use and diesel and avoids herbicides. Oates Ends are also employing sheep in their Wilagri Vineyard to do their leaf plucking. By briefly sending the sheep through the vineyard during the growing season, if timed well, this opens the canopy to increase airflow and vine health without the use of machinery.

DUCKS AND GEESE

Burnside Organic are using Geese in the vineyard to minimise Kikuyu grasses. In 2022, Voyager Estate trialled the use of Muscovy Ducks to control snails in their Ullingers vineyard, with noticeable reductions in those blocks that the ducks frequented. There are no silver bullets in organics, but the trial succeeded enough that Voyager Estate added a second flock to another vineyard in 2023.



PACKAGING AND LIGHTWEIGHT GLASS

Many Margaret River producers have now switched to lightweight glass. Dr Michael Peterkin of Pierro Wines began this back in 2012. Glass bottles and packaging and transport represent up to 75% of a typical wine producer's carbon emission. The heavier the bottle, the more fuel burns in its production and transportation, and the more emissions soar. Switching to lightweight glass typically represents a 22% reduction in a wine's carbon footprint.

Small Things Wine is leading the charge with alternative packaging, with all their wine going into aluminium cans, a packaging format that can represent a 70% reduction in CO₂ emissions.

Idée Fixe have bought their specialised sparkling bottle production onshore after a year of working with an Australian glass manufacturer. The first production run is November 2023, and this will dramatically reduce carbon miles and support Australian business.

APCO MEMBERSHIP

The Australian Packaging Covenant Organisation (APCO) aims to keep as much packaging out of landfills as possible by minimising packaging and then ensuring what is used is reusable, recyclable, or compostable. Producers who have signed up include Cullen Wines, Deep Woods Estate, Howard Park Wines, La Kooki, Leeuwin Estate, Stella Bella Wines and Vasse Felix.

Additional Information



MARGARET RIVER WINE ASSOCIATION SUSTAINABILITY CASE STUDIES

[Revegetation Program – Voyager Estate](#)

[Wastewater – Cape Mentelle & Stormflower](#)

[Energy Savings – Xanadu Winery](#)

LINKS, PARTNERSHIPS AND RESOURCES

[Australian Packaging Covenant Organisation \(APCO\)](#)

[EcoVinyards](#)

[Friends of the Cape-to-Cape Track](#)

[International Wineries for Climate Action](#)

[Nature Conservation Margaret River Region](#)

[Sustainable Winegrowing Australia](#)

[Sustainable Wine Roundtable](#)

[Wine Australia Emissions Roadmap](#)



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