



Sustainable Winegrowing Australia Program Guide

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This guide is frequently updated in response to member enquiries. To search for specific information, click on the relevant section of the table of contents or use the 'Search' function to find key words.



AWRI

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Sustainable Winegrowing Australia

Sustainable Winegrowing Australia is the Australian wine industry's sustainability program – set up to support growers and winemakers in demonstrating and improving the sustainability of their businesses.

Sustainable Winegrowing Australia provides credentials that cover the fundamental components of sustainability (environmental, social and economic) and can be applied to both the vineyard and winery. The program provides benchmarking tools and resources to enable planning, evaluation, control and communication.

Sustainable Winegrowing Australia is a voluntary program designed with flexibility to suit the changing goals and needs of all Australian grape and wine producers. It provides information for wine industry research, development and extension activities and can be used by members for benchmarking.



**Supporting a sustainable
Australian grape and
wine community**

Frequently asked questions

1. Why should I join Sustainable Winegrowing Australia?



In Australia, as around the world, retailers, restaurants and consumers are looking to buy or offer wines that meet modern sustainability standards. Australian wine producers are renowned for their high standards across the three pillars of sustainability: environmental, community and economic. Sustainable Winegrowing Australia provides a platform for members to demonstrate, substantiate and communicate their commitment to sustainability and continuous improvement.

2. How does Sustainable Winegrowing Australia work?

Sustainable Winegrowing Australia members commit to annually reporting business metrics and completing a workbook of vineyard or winery practices. The program covers the fundamental components of sustainability (environmental, social and economic) and can be applied to both the vineyard and winery. All data entered into the online system undergoes review at the AWRI and, in October, members can access individual, customisable benchmarking reports. Members who choose to be certified undergo an external audit by an approved certification body, in addition to maintaining Sustainable Winegrowing Australia membership. Sustainable Winegrowing Australia membership provides benchmarking tools and resources to enable planning, evaluation, control and communication.

All data collected from members is managed under the [terms and conditions](#), which ensure confidentiality and privacy of all member information.

Governance and continuous improvement

Sustainable Winegrowing Australia is managed by the AWRI. Industry input is provided by a Sustainability Advisory Committee (SAC) which includes program users, regional representatives and other key stakeholders. The SAC is convened by Australian Grape & Wine. The SAC will provide insights and recommendations to Australian Grape & Wine on emerging issues affecting the reputation, resilience and sustainability of Australia's grape and wine producers. Recommendations will be used to guide advocacy in the political and regulatory environment and provide advice to the Sustainable Winegrowing Australia steering committee (which has representatives from the AWRI, Wine Australia and Australian Grape & Wine) regarding the strategic direction of the program.

Marketing Sustainable Winegrowing Australia

A trustmark is desired by some in the industry. The steering committee of Sustainable Winegrowing Australia will consider development of a trustmark in tandem with program uptake by industry. Members are encouraged to communicate their sustainability stories and credentials when marketing their grapes and wine.

Each region will have its own unique sustainability story to tell using the aggregated data provided by members. Regions will be provided with regional Sustainable Winegrowing Australia data upon request and under certain conditions to be negotiated with the AWRI. Please contact Mardi Longbottom for further information mardi.longbottom@awri.com.au.

3. What are the membership requirements?

Sustainable Winegrowing Australia membership is available to all Australian wine-grape growers and wineries. The person responsible for the membership should be the primary decision-maker in the business. This may be the owner, a senior manager or, in some cases, a management contractor. The company that is responsible for the management of the vineyard or winery is the entity that can join Sustainable Winegrowing Australia, whether or not this includes land ownership. The member commits to support and comply with the program at all times.

Vineyard membership may vary depending on ownership structures and location. If a company owns/operates several vineyards/blocks within the same GI region and these are operated as a single business (e.g. managed in the same way), a single membership is required. If a company manages multiple vineyards which are operated separately (e.g. in different geographical regions, as a contract management company or the vineyards are managed differently) separate memberships are required for each operational area. Co-owned and co-located vineyards and wineries hold individual memberships for the vineyard and the winery.

Membership covers the financial year 1 July-30 June. Membership is renewed annually online during July/August. All data supplied are for the previous financial year; for example, 2019/20 membership commences in July 2019. The data and information supplied at that time is from the 2018/19 financial year.

All members report business metrics (Table 1) and submit the 'practices' workbook to the AWRI through the Sustainable Winegrowing Australia online interface. The workbook contains multiple choice questions covering major elements including energy, water, biodiversity, air, waste, land and soil, fertiliser and soil additives, chemicals, business, community impact and environmental action planning.

For a full list of Sustainable Winegrowing Australia members, please visit the online member register [here](#).

Table 1. Business metrics annually supplied by all Sustainable Winegrowing Australia members.

Sustainable Winegrowing Australia environmental resource indicators	
Vineyard members	Winery members
Tonnes of grapes produced (% red and white)	Tonnes of grapes crushed (% red and white)
Production system (conventional, organic, biodynamic)	Winemaking processing and packaging volumes
Area under vine	Total winery water used
Electricity purchased	Total wastewater generated
Electricity generated	Winery wastewater treatment
Total water used	Total solid waste produced
Total nitrogen applied	Solid waste treatment (recycling/compost)
Total petrol used	Electricity purchased
Total diesel used	Electricity generated
Total LPG used	Total natural gas used
Irrigation type	Total petrol used
Irrigation source	Total diesel used
Use of contractors	Total LPG used
Vineyard floor management	Winemaking CO ₂ use
Biodiversity area	Synthetic refrigerants
	Biodiversity area

Membership categories

There are two membership categories (members and certified members). Grape and wine businesses can choose the category that best suits their needs.

Members

Members of Sustainable Winegrowing Australia must annually report the Sustainable Winegrowing Australia business metrics and complete the workbook. Members do not require an independent audit. Becoming a member of Sustainable Winegrowing Australia is a pathway to certified membership.

Certified members

Certified members of Sustainable Winegrowing Australia choose to be independently certified by undergoing a triennial, third-party audit against the Australian Wine Industry Standards of Sustainable Practice (AWISSP) for viticulture and wineries. The AWISSP have been developed and updated over the past ten years by incorporating feedback from wine-grape growers and wineries, and in consultation with trainers, auditors and technical experts. The standards are independently maintained by Freshcare Ltd and are currently undergoing review to include additional elements.

What's involved in being certified?

All members seeking certification require an independent audit against the AWISSP. An essential part of certification is the attendance at an approved one-off training session facilitated by the AWRI. Training covers all of the necessary elements of the program including the processes, plans and evidence required to pass an audit. Training will be delivered to groups (up to 25 people) on a cost-recovery basis (~\$250 per business). Once training is complete, processes and records must be collated and/or changes in the vineyard or winery made in preparation for an audit.

The certification process is as follows:

1. Contact the AWRI on events@awri.com.au to arrange attendance at training.
2. Implement required processes and/or changes in the vineyard or winery based on information from the standards.
3. Contact an approved audit provider to arrange an audit. A list of approved audit providers can be accessed [here](#).

To maintain certification, a successful audit must be completed every three years by an approved certification body.

[How much does auditing cost?](#)

Members who choose to become certified will incur additional fees associated with auditing. It is important that businesses are well prepared with all of the necessary processes in place and documentation required to meet the compliance criteria prior to an audit. Failure to meet all of the compliance criteria will result in a prolonged and costly audit and sometimes, if all of the criteria are not met at the time of audit, a repeat visit by the auditor may be required and additional costs incurred. Prices for auditing vary (~\$750-\$2,000) depending on the size and location of the business and the certification body engaged. Members are advised to seek quotes from multiple providers prior to arranging an audit.

[Will existing certification be recognised by Sustainable Winegrowing Australia?](#)

Yes. All existing certification with SAW, Freshcare and ISO14001 will be recognised for the period for which it is valid (up to three years). Thereafter, certified members who wish to retain certification will need to transition to certification against the AWISSP.

Certified members who continue to use ISO14001 beyond the existing certification period must obtain co-recognition against the AWISSP to maintain Sustainable Winegrowing Australia certified member status. For further information, please contact Mardi Longbottom on 08 8313 6600 or mardi.longbottom@awri.com.au.

[What are the benefits of being a certified member?](#)

There are a number of different reasons businesses choose to become certified. For some it is useful to have an independent body review their practices and provide advice on areas for improvement. For others it is important to have independent verification of their sustainability claims so that they can confidently communicate their credentials with their supply chain.

[I let my certification lapse but I'd like to reinstate it, what should I do?](#)

Freshcare – if you have maintained the required practices and records, contact an approved auditor to arrange an audit.

SAW – Arrange to attend an approved training session, ensure the required processes and records are in place and contact an approved auditor to arrange an audit.

ISO14001 – if you intend to reinstate ISO14001 certification, you will be required to gain co-recognition against the AWISSP. Refer to the certification process outlined above.

[Can the vineyard and winery be audited at the same time?](#)

Yes, this can be arranged with the auditor and quoted prior to engaging a certification body. If conducted at the same time, the cost of a combined vineyard and winery audit should be less than the sum of two separate audits.

Membership fees

Membership fees are due at the time of completion of the data and workbook each year. Failure to complete the online membership renewal during the July/August renewal period will result in suspension from the program. Membership fees are shown in Table 2.

Table 2. Sustainable Winegrowing Australia membership fees.

Membership category	Membership requirements	Annual fees ^a		Certification fees
		Vineyards	Wineries	
Certified member	1. Annual reporting of vineyard/winery workbook and business metrics	\$110	\$110	Training ^b - ~\$250 (once only)
	2. Triennial certification against the Australian Wine Industry viticulture and winery standards			Audit ^c - ~\$800 (applied independently)
Member	1. Annual reporting of vineyard/winery workbook and business metrics	\$110	\$110	

^a Fees are quoted in Australian dollars and include GST. Fees are for one year's membership (1 July 2019-30 June 2020), payable during the July/August renewal period and are not refundable.

^b Training is a one-off requirement for certification and is facilitated by the AWRI.

^c Auditing is conducted triennially. Fees vary between independent certification bodies. Members are advised to seek quotes from multiple certification bodies prior to arranging an audit.

Acknowledgements – a brief history of sustainability in Australian grape and wine production

The Australian wine industry has a long history of research and development and sustainable management of vineyards and wineries. In the 1990s, the Cooperative Research Centre for Viticulture developed some foundational resources, components of which are still used today. In 2009, a national sustainability program for wine-grape growers and wineries, Entwine Australia, was launched by the Winemakers' Federation of Australia (now Australian Grape & Wine) with funds from the Grape and Wine Research and Development Corporation (now Wine Australia) and the Australian Government 'Caring for our Country' program. The management of Entwine Australia transferred from WFA to the Australian Wine Research Institute (AWRI) in August 2015. At this time, features including the Australian wine carbon calculator and Entwine benchmarking capacity were supported with funds from the Australian Government and best practice management surveys were developed for vineyards and wineries with the support of Treasury Wine Estates.

Concurrently, sustainability systems were developed in numerous regions including Margaret River, Yarra Valley, Murray Valley, Adelaide Hills, Hunter Valley and McLaren Vale. In 2013 the McLaren Vale Grape, Wine & Tourism Association (MVGWTA) re-launched its 'Generational Farming' program online after review as 'Sustainable Australia Winegrowing (SAW)' with support from the South Australian Government through PIRSA and Wine Australia.

Following a global review of the sustainability landscape in 2017, which was funded through the Food Agility Cooperative Research Centre, the AWRI and MVGWTA, with support from Wine Australia and Australian Grape & Wine, worked together to develop Sustainable Winegrowing Australia, a united Australian sustainability program. Sustainable Winegrowing Australia builds on the strengths of the Entwine Australia and SAW programs.

Sustainable Winegrowing Australia is managed by the AWRI. Industry input is provided by a Sustainability Advisory Committee (SAC) which includes program users, regional representatives and other key stakeholders. The SAC is convened by Australian Grape & Wine. National strategic oversight of Sustainable Winegrowing Australia is provided by a steering committee comprising representatives of Australian Grape & Wine, Wine Australia and the AWRI. The AWRI is the Australian wine industry's own research organisation, supporting grape and wine producers with the development and adoption of innovative tools and practices.

For more information about Sustainable Winegrowing Australia, visit the program's webpage: sustainablewinegrowing.com.au or contact the viticulture and winemaking experts at the AWRI helpdesk on helpdesk@awri.com.au or 08 8313 6600.