



30 October 2023

Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry
GPO Box 858
Canberra ACT 2601
WinePolicy@aff.gov.au

To whom it may concern,

Re: Wine Tourism and Cellar Door Grant Program

The Queensland Tourism Industry Council (QTIC) welcomes the opportunity to provide feedback to the Australian Government Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry regarding the *Wine Tourism and Cellar Door Grant Program*.

QTIC is the peak industry body and leading advocate for the tourism, hospitality, and events sectors in Queensland, committed to the growth and sustainability of the state visitor economy. Our efforts focus on powerful lobbying, policy development, and collaboration with key industry stakeholders to create a favourable business environment for operators. As a not-for-profit, membership-based organisation, we take pride in ensuring that the concerns and needs of our members and the broader tourism industry inform all relevant policy debates and that businesses have strong representation in decision-making processes. By promoting the value and importance of tourism in government forums and to the wider community, we help to create a vibrant, diverse industry that benefits all.

QTIC offers the following comments in response to the discussion paper key focus areas:

General

Agritourism is an invaluable part of the Queensland tourism industry, providing visitors with a unique, immersive experience in rural and regional areas. With demand for Australian agritourism offerings projected to reach \$18.6 billion by 2030¹, it drives industry development and regional resilience through opportunities for business diversification.

QTIC draws attention to specific existing agritourism strategies and initiatives that align with and could guide changes to the *Wine Tourism and Cellar Door Grant Program*:

- Queensland Farmers' Federation *Agritourism Roadmap*²
- *Queensland Agritourism Business Grants*, administered by the Queensland Farmers' Federation and the Queensland Government Department of Agriculture and Fisheries.³
- Australian Trade and Investment Commission *Thrive 2030* strategy, Priority Action 7.5: "Produce and promote suites of products that will assist tourism businesses to develop high-quality, distinctly Australian agritourism experiences and build business capability programs that drive innovation, diversification and regional product development".⁴

¹ Wynn, K & Sebastian, B (2019) [Growth opportunities for Australian food and agribusiness – Economic analysis and market sizing](#), CSIRO Futures.

² Regionality (2020) [Agritourism roadmap](#), prepared for the Queensland Farmers' Federation.

³ Queensland Farmers' Federation (2022) [Queensland Agritourism Business Grants](#).

⁴ Australian Trade and Investment Commission (2021) [Thrive 2030 revisited: The re-imagined visitor economy strategy](#), Australian Government, Priority Action 7.5, p. 76.

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- Queensland Government Department of Tourism, Innovation and Sport *Towards Tourism 2032: Transforming Queensland's visitor economy future*, Action Item Supply 21: "Promote and integrate Queensland's farming and food tourism experiences, including working with industry to identify growth opportunities as part of regional tourism strategies."⁵

Objectives

QTIC firmly supports all options outlined in the proposed framework to direct future grant activity, including agritourism, sustainability and climate resilience, diversity and workforce development, and trade and export strategies. We advocate for the integration of these objectives as fundamental priorities in the grant guidelines.

Eligibility criteria

The current applicant threshold of \$1.207 million in sales of rebatable wine and \$1.207 million in accrued sales for the relevant financial year, is a high barrier to entry, limiting access to vital business development support.

QTIC strongly recommends revising eligibility criteria of the grant program to include small and medium producers. This adjustment would more accurately mirror the prevailing tourism business landscape, particularly in Queensland, where over 90% of tourism enterprises are categorised as micro, small, or medium.⁶ Including small and medium producers in the eligibility criteria would recognise the significant role these operators play in shaping the regional economies, contributing to innovation, employment, tourism, and local economic growth. By opening opportunities for these businesses to access grants, the program effectively nurtures a more vibrant agritourism ecosystem.

Application process

QTIC recommends transitioning the current grant application process into a competitive model with project proposals and reporting requirements, in line with other established grants programs. This approach would also enable annual adjustments to eligible projects for each funding round, based on evolving investment priorities. However, it is important to note that challenges such as staff shortages and escalating costs place significant demands on SMEs, impacting the time available to focus on the more strategic aspects of the business. As such, the competitive grants process should maintain clarity and thoroughness without becoming overly burdensome.

QTIC looks forward to contributing to any future discussions arising from this review and engaging in a positive, productive dialogue with the Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry. For further discussion on any points raised in this submission, please contact QTIC on (07) 3236 1445 or email policy@qtic.com.au.

Yours sincerely,



Brett Fraser
Chief Executive Officer

⁵ Department of Tourism, Innovation and Sport (2022), [Towards Tourism 2032: Transforming Queensland's visitor economy](#), Queensland Government, Action Item Supply 21, p. 19.

⁶ Tourism Research Australia (2023) [Tourism businesses in Australia – June 2017-2022](#), Australian Trade and Investment Commission.