

AGRITOURISM STRATEGIC ROADMAP 2026-2029



Greater Geelong, The Bellarine and Moorabool Valley

Prepared by Tourism Greater Geelong and The Bellarine
and Holly Formosa Consulting

April 2026

TOURISM

**GEELONG
AND THE BELLARINE**

Contents

1. Executive Summary..... 2

2. Context and Sector Insights 3

3. Regional Snapshot and Challenges 4

4. Agritourism Readiness Framework..... 6

5. Regional Differentiators and Agritourism Themes 12

6. Strategic Initiatives..... 14

7. Implementation Pathway and Next Steps 18

APPENDICES 23

1. Agritourism Workshop Overview 24

2. Tourism Research Australia Agritourism Report Summary 31

1. Executive Summary

Greater Geelong, The Bellarine, and Moorabool Valley comprise one of Victoria’s most diverse agrifood destinations ranging from coastal seafood and wineries to small-batch producers and on-farm experiences. As demand for food-led travel grows, this roadmap outlines how the region can build on its strengths to unlock sustainable growth.

Aligned with Australian Regional Tourism’s *Agritourism 2030: National Agritourism Strategy Framework*, the roadmap prioritises sustainable farm diversification, quality on-farm experiences, regional employment, and responsible ecosystem development.

Key insights were drawn from the November 2025 Geelong Agritourism Roundtable, sector research, and national and global trends. A key finding is that while the Bellarine’s agritourism sector is more established, operator capability remains mixed, with varying levels of experience, consistency, and visitor readiness across the region. In Moorabool Valley and Golden Plains, many operators are earlier in their agritourism journey, highlighting the need for targeted support across different stages of development.

To address this, the roadmap introduces a four-stage Readiness Framework tailored to operators’ maturity levels and identifies seven priority initiatives to be progressed over three years, aligned with funding and partnership opportunities.

This practical tool aims to support regional alignment, grant applications, product development, and investment attraction offering both a shared direction and flexibility to adapt to different subregions and business needs.

2. Context and Sector Insights

Agritourism is one of Australia’s fastest-growing visitor segments, contributing over \$20 billion annually. Victoria leads the nation in participation, with increasing demand for experiences that blend food, sustainability, provenance, and hands-on interaction with producers.

This roadmap aligns with Australian Regional Tourism’s *Agritourism 2030* framework, which defines agritourism as on-farm visitor experiences connected to agriculture, supported by a broader ecosystem of food, drink, and touring services.

Agritourism businesses may include, but are not limited to:

- **Farm gate sales and producer outlets** where visitors can purchase produce directly from the grower
- **Working farms** offering guided tours, demonstrations, pick-your-own, or hands-on experiences
- **Cheese makers, olive groves, berry growers, mushroom growers, seafood farms and specialty food producers** with visitor experiences linked to production
- **Wineries, cideries, breweries and distilleries** offering cellar doors, tastings, tours or on-site events
- **Agritourism accommodation**, such as farm stays, glamping or vineyard cottages, where the stay is tied to the agricultural setting
- **Food and drink tours and trails**, tasting trails or clustered producer experiences anchored in regional agriculture
- **Producer-led workshops or classes**, such as cooking, crafting, fermentation or farming skills
- **Agrifood markets, events and festivals** when they have a strong connection to local producers and production
- **Indigenous food** experiences and tours

This strategy responds through a tailored readiness framework, product development, compliance pathways, funding alignment, and integrated food and event experiences.

Globally, 84% of international travellers express interest in agritourism¹ driven by food, culture, and immersive experiences. These travellers tend to stay longer and spend more, particularly on food, accommodation, and guided activities.

Victoria’s strength lies in its agricultural diversity, strong intrastate and interstate visitation, proximity to Melbourne, and growing reputation for premium food and drink. Within this, Greater Geelong and the Bellarine offer a mix of coastal and inland experiences with established wine regions and a concentration of small producers.

¹ *Source: Tourism Research Australia (TRA), *Agritourism Insights Report*. See Appendix 2.

Moorabool Valley brings a distinct character, home to some of Victoria’s oldest and most established wineries, alongside strong horticulture, and a growing focus on visitor experiences, requiring targeted support and capability building to unlock its tourism potential.

With better coordination, visibility, and operator support, the region is well-placed to lead agritourism growth in Victoria. The roadmap also supports sustainability and Caring for Country, emphasising land stewardship, community benefit, and opportunities for First Nations collaboration.

<<< Need to source a proper map of the region >>>



3. Regional Snapshot and Challenges

The region has many strengths. It features a broad range of producers including wine, spirits, seafood, berries, and specialty products. Portarlington is known as the mussel farming capital of Australia and hosts the popular Mussel Festival. The region also supports a vibrant festival scene including the National Celtic Festival, Toast to the Coast, Taste of the Bellarine and Queenscliff Music Festival.

A defining strength is the accessibility of its' small-scale producers. Many are agile, collaborative, and able to host hands-on visitor experiences. The compact geography linking city, coast, and countryside adds to the region's appeal.

However, several challenges emerged during consultations:

- Staffing shortages are widespread, especially in hospitality and visitor-facing roles.
- Regulatory barriers can be a challenge. Complex planning rules and high infrastructure requirements can make it difficult for new experiences to launch.
- Transport access is limited. Visitors without cars find it hard to travel between sites, reducing the potential for regional exploration.
- Marketing visibility is uneven. Smaller operators struggle to appear in regional campaigns due to limited resources of their own to invest in marketing their products and experiences.
- Readiness gaps exist. The Bellarine has more mature agritourism operators, while the Moorabool Valley has established wine producers but generally is still developing diversity in other visitor-facing experiences and its tourism identity.

The roadmap responds by introducing a Readiness Framework that helps tailor support based on each operator's stage of development.

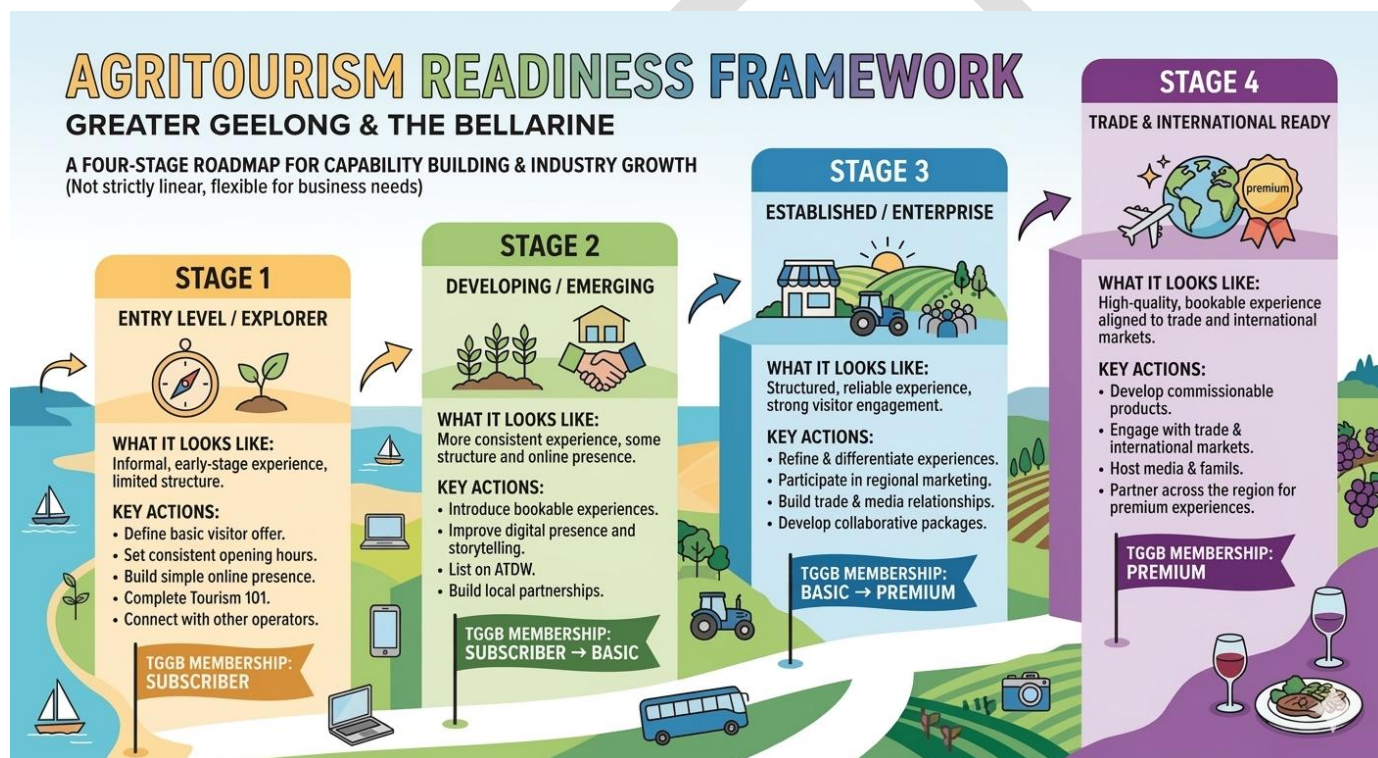


4. Agritourism Readiness Framework

Operators across Greater Geelong and the Bellarine operate at different levels of tourism maturity, with varying capabilities, business models and motivations. This requires targeted support and tailored initiatives to strengthen and grow agritourism across the region.

To support this, the region will apply a four-stage readiness framework. This framework is a guide to help identify current capability and prioritise support. It is not necessarily a linear progression. Businesses, including producers, hospitality venues and tour operators, may sit across multiple stages or choose to operate at a stage that aligns with their model.

The framework supports the development of high quality, market ready agritourism experiences, while providing a clear structure for capability building, industry engagement and long-term growth.



Note: this is an AI produced image and needs to be recreated/replaced.

Stage 1: Entry Level/Explorer

Characteristics:

- Operators are testing or forming a visitor experience.
- Trading hours are limited or irregular.
- Experiences are informal and early stage, with minimal understanding of regulation or safety requirements.
- Marketing is mostly through local word of mouth or basic social media.

Indicators:

- Open only on weekends, seasonally or occasionally.
- No booking system.
- Visitor journey is undefined.
- Infrastructure is minimal.

Visitor Experience:

- The experience feels informal and unstructured.
- Visitors may arrive without clear expectations, with limited signage or guidance, and interactions depend on who is available on the day.

Support Priorities:

- Basic planning and compliance literacy. Introductory experience design.
- Understanding demand and pricing.
- Setting up a basic online presence. TGGB member level subscriber.
- Access to Tourism 101 resources via TGGB.

Next Steps:

- Sign up as a TGGB subscriber and join the database.
- Complete Tourism 101 foundational content.
- Establish consistent opening hours.
- Set up a basic online presence and ensure key business information is available to visitors.
- Participate in TGGB networking opportunities to connect with other operators and build awareness of the regional offer.

Stage 2: Developing / Emerging Operator

Characteristics:

- Operators offer regular or seasonal experiences with some consistency.
- Online presence is improving.
- They are beginning to collaborate locally and can host small groups confidently.

Indicators:

- Bookings are accepted online. Visitor areas are purpose built.
- Some local partnerships are in place. Visitor feedback is collected informally.
- Upgrade from TGGB subscriber to Base level membership recommended.

Visitor Experience:

- The experience is more intentional but still inconsistent.
- Visitors can engage in a defined activity, though booking, service levels and overall flow may vary.

Support Priorities:

- Packaging and pricing of experiences.
- Brand storytelling.
- Foundational digital marketing.
- ATDW listing.
- Continued access to Tourism 101 and digital capability resources.
- Networking facilitation through TGGB and regional partners.

Next Steps:

- Formalise bookable experiences.
- Develop partnerships with other local operators.
- Listing on ATDW.
- Improve digital presence and storytelling.
- Attend networking and collaboration opportunities to build packages or cross promotion.

Stage 3: Established Operator/Enterprise

Characteristics:

- Experiences run consistently with strong visitor engagement.
- Bookings are managed across channels.
- Brands are recognised and capable of hosting larger groups.

Indicators:

- Open four to seven days a week depending on the season.
- Strong reviews and return visitors.
- Participation in regional trails and marketing. Experiences are structured and time based.
- Has an ATDW listing.
- TGGB membership level Base, with transition to Premium recommended.

Visitor Experience:

- The experience is well structured and reliable.
- Visitors can expect clear booking, consistent service and a considered end to end journey.

Support Priorities:

- Media and public relations readiness.
- Differentiation of offerings.
- Trade and operator partnerships.
- Infrastructure for group visits.
- Inclusion in regional marketing and campaigns.
- Facilitated networking through TGGB and tourism partners to support collaboration and packaging opportunities.

Next Steps:

- Refine and clearly articulate the experience offering.
- Build relationships with trade, media and regional partners.
- Participate in regional marketing initiatives and campaigns.
- Develop collaborative packages with other operators.
- Attend networking and industry events to expand reach and partnerships.

Stage 4: Trade and International Ready/High Functioning Tourism Operator

Characteristics:

- High quality, bookable experiences that meet trade standards, including commissionable pricing and packaging capability.
- Operators can work effectively with international markets and relevant Tourism Greater Geelong and The Bellarine teams.
- They offer professional hosting, media engagement and scalable group options.

Indicators:

- Availability year-round with seasonal clarity.
- Online and accessible booking systems that allow visitors to book at any time, with clear policies.
- Accessibility or multilingual options.
- Trade friendly pricing and packaging.
- Sustainability practices are embedded in operations and communicated to visitors.
- Has an ATDW listing.
- TGGB membership level Premium.

Visitor Experience:

- The experience feels premium, seamless and memorable.
- Visitors are engaged through a distinctive, well executed offering that connects strongly to the broader region.

Support Priorities:

International trade training. Involvement in familiarisation programs. Partnering with accommodation. Innovation in high end products.

Agritourism Readiness: Actions and Membership Alignment:

The table below summarises how operators can progress their agritourism offering, with key actions and alignment to TGGB membership and support.

Stage	What this looks like	Key Actions	TGGB Membership
Stage 1 Entry Level / Explorer	Informal, early-stage experience with limited structure	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Define a basic visitor offer. • Set consistent opening hours. • Build a simple online presence. • Complete Tourism 101. • Connect with other operators. 	Subscriber
Stage 2 Developing / Emerging	More consistent experience with some structure and online presence	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Introduce bookable experiences. • Improve digital presence and storytelling. • List on ATDW. • Build local partnerships. 	Subscriber → Base
Stage 3 Established / Enterprise	Structured, reliable experience with strong visitor engagement	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Refine and differentiate experiences. • Participate in regional marketing. • Build trade and media relationships. • Develop collaborative packages. 	Base → Premium
Stage 4 Trade and International Ready	High-quality, bookable experience aligned to trade and international markets	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop commissionable products. • Engage with trade and international markets. • Host media and famils. • Partner across the region to deliver premium experiences. 	Premium

5. Regional Differentiators and Agritourism Themes

To stand out in a competitive Victorian agritourism landscape, Greater Geelong, the Bellarine, and Moorabool Valley must clearly articulate what makes the region distinct. This section defines the region's marketing position and identifies experience themes to guide product development, trail design, and campaign storytelling.

5.1 Regional Differentiators

These positioning statements highlight what the region offers that others do not:

- 1. Australia's Mussel Capital**
Portarlington's mussel industry is a defining feature. It offers a signature, sea-to-plate story that links aquaculture with wine, trails, dining, and events.
- 2. Authentic and Accessible Makers and Small-Batch Culture**
Visitors can meet the producers—winemakers, distillers, farmers, and foragers—who are directly involved in creating the experiences. This personal, hands-on approach sets the region apart from more commercial or luxury focussed agritourism destinations.
- 3. City, Coast, and Country in One Place**
The region uniquely combines a major UNESCO city of design (Geelong) with coastal landscapes, farmland, and wine regions within a short drive. Visitors can explore urban precincts, beaches, vineyards, and farms all in one itinerary.
- 4. Multi-Modal Access**
Few regions offer such flexible access. The area is reachable by ferry, train, car, bus, and Avalon Airport, making it ideal for both car-free travel and short breaks.
- 5. Authentic, Approachable, and Maker-Led**
Compared to the lifestyle image of Mornington or the prestige of Yarra Valley, this region leans into a rustic charm. The focus is on real people, local stories, and creative, community-rooted experiences.



5.2 Agritourism Experience Themes

These six themes offer a creative foundation for building itineraries, trails, events, and campaigns:

1. Farm and Sea Journeys

Combine inland farms and coastal producers to showcase the region's unique geography.

Examples: paddock-to-port itineraries, seafood and farmgate long lunches, cycling routes linking coast to farmland.

2. Maker to Table

Celebrate the people behind the produce with experiences that bring visitors closer to the craft.

Examples: behind-the-scenes tours, meet-the-maker dinners, winemaker and distiller workshops, seasonal markets.

3. Seasonal Abundance

Anchor experiences in the rhythms of the land and sea.

Examples: winter warmers and fireside tastings, spring lambing and wine releases, summer berry and seafood harvests, autumn fungi walks and harvest festivals.

4. Slow, Connected Itineraries

Promote immersive, low-impact travel that invites discovery and depth.

Examples: rail trail journeys, self-drive farm-stay loops, scenic touring routes, nature and agrifood pairings. Opportunities such as cycling experiences may be explored over time as infrastructure and safety conditions improve.

5. Creative Coast and Countryside

Combine agrifood experiences with complementary creative activities to broaden appeal while staying grounded in food and farming.

Winery and maker experiences, farm-based workshops (ceramics, photography, crafts), and seasonal events that combine food, produce and local creative industries.

6. Family-Friendly Agrifood Adventures

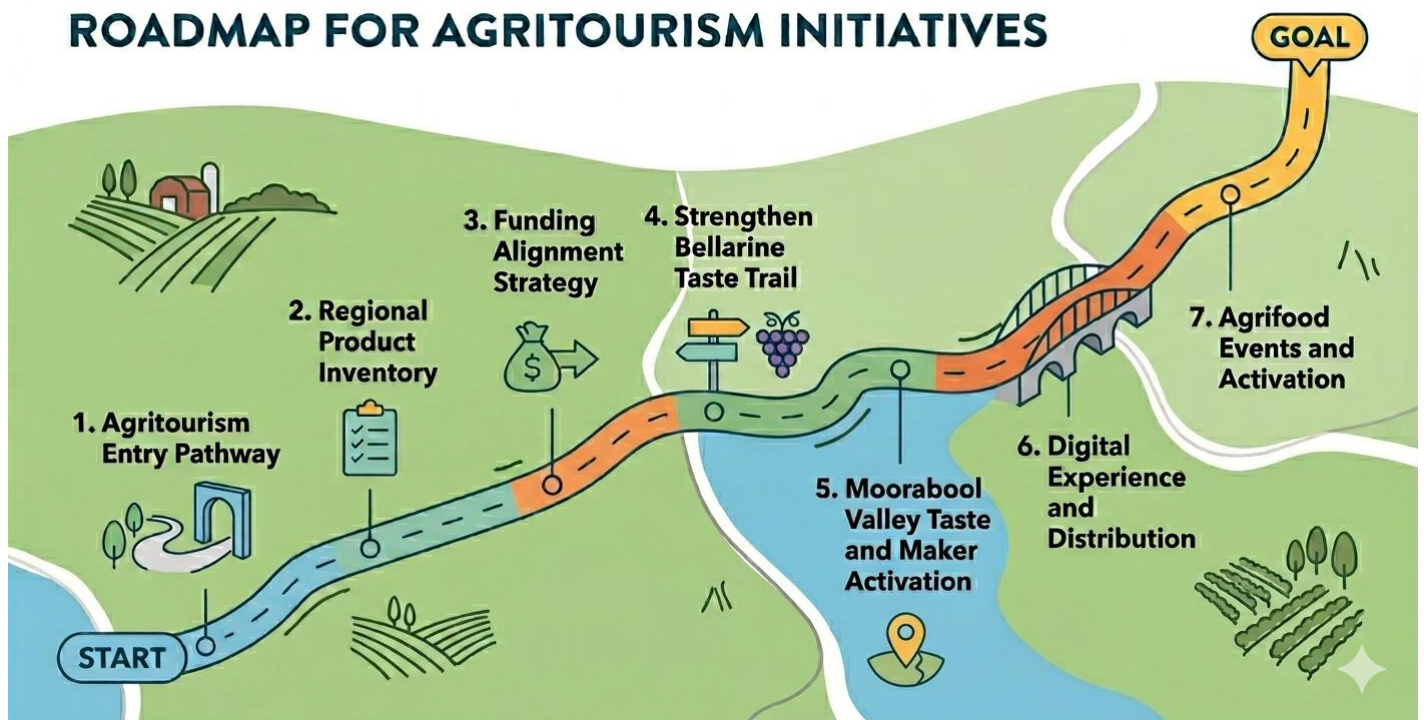
Position the region as a family-accessible destination, balancing value and engagement.

Examples: pick-your-own farms, wildlife and food trails, interactive food events for children, affordable day trips.

6. Strategic Initiatives

To grow a sustainable and competitive agritourism sector, the region must invest in initiatives that support operators, strengthen product quality, improve access, and build market visibility. These initiatives provide a roadmap for action over the next three years.

ROADMAP FOR AGRITOURISM INITIATIVES



<<insert road map style visual diagram to reflect final strategic initiatives list – to be done at the end. Note the above image is an AI image and needs to be recreated/redesigned >>

6.1 Agritourism Entry Pathway

Focus: Capability building and compliance support for emerging operators.

Purpose:

Reduce barriers to entry and build the regional supply of visitor-ready operators and diverse visitor experiences, especially in the Moorabool Valley area.

Actions:

- Develop Agritourism 101 toolkits that guide operators through key requirements including experience development, compliance and digital readiness, and connect them to existing platforms such as ATDW and Tourism Australia for distribution and visibility.

Agritourism Road Map 2026-29

- Capture and maintain a database of emerging operators through workshops, toolkits and events, enabling ongoing communication and progression into TGGB programs and membership.
- Deliver seasonal Agritourism 101 workshops tailored training in experience design, compliance basics, pricing, and digital presence (potentially in conjunction with council business concierge to assist with planning and permits).
- Provide targeted advisory support for emerging operators, delivered through structured sessions or small group formats to ensure scalability and alignment with available resources.
- Identify grant opportunities for infrastructure, digital upgrades and business development.
- Provide clear, council-specific guidance on planning and permit pathways across the region, supported by pre-application advice in partnership with local business concierge services.
- Identify existing networking opportunities for emerging operators to connect with and learn from other agritourism businesses in the region.

6.2 Regional Product Inventory

Focus: Establish baseline data on current agritourism offerings.

Purpose:

Create a clear, measurable understanding of current agritourism experiences by leveraging existing data sources and identifying gaps in the regional offering.

Actions:

- Map wineries, farmgates, markets, tours, and accommodation-linked agri-experiences.
- Assess digital presence, bookability and trail involvement using a consistent readiness framework to identify capability gaps and development priorities.
- Identify gaps and clusters for future development.



6.3 Funding Alignment Strategy

Focus: Align regional priorities with available funding programs

Purpose:

Ensure regional agritourism priorities are clearly defined and positioned to align with existing government funding streams and strategic frameworks, including SDMP.

Actions:

- Map regional infrastructure and product priorities against existing Local, State and Federal funding programs
- Align identified priorities with relevant strategic frameworks (including SDMP) to support advocacy and funding eligibility
- Identify and prioritise grant-ready initiatives across the region
- Support operators and partners with guidance on funding opportunities and application processes
- Advocate for regional priorities with government and funding bodies

6.4 Strengthen Bellarine Taste Trail

Focus: Review, refresh and elevate the region's flagship agritourism trail.

Purpose:

Ensure the trail remains a nationally competitive asset that supports higher-yield visitation.

Actions:

- Conduct a review of active operators/members, signage, branding, content, and trail narratives
- Identify and pursue opportunities for improved wayfinding and trail infrastructure
- Develop supporting assets for participating businesses to strengthen trail visibility and 'next stop' messaging
- Improve operator readiness, consistency, and bookability
- Develop themed itineraries via consumer website functionality
- Facilitate industry engagement sessions to gather feedback and inform ongoing trail development
- Continue to invest in targeted marketing to drive awareness and visitation to the trail, with a focus on self-drive, tour operators and operator-led experiences.
- Support and promote operator-led events and experiences to drive awareness and engagement with the trail.

6.5 Moorabool Valley Taste Trail and Maker Activation

Focus: Evaluate the potential and viability of re-establishing a taste trail in the Moorabool Valley area, while supporting emerging agritourism operators.

Purpose:

Strengthen inland visitor experiences within the Moorabool Valley, build opportunities for local producers, and increase the long-term viability of a Moorabool Valley taste trail. This will require a destination-led approach that builds demand, rather than relying on passing visitation.

Actions:

- Define Moorabool Valley's agritourism identity, aligned to the region's broader positioning while reflecting its distinct inland and emerging character.
- Work in partnership with Golden Plains Shire to assess trail viability, including product readiness, clustering potential and market fit.
- Support niche and emerging producers through targeted training, capability development and entry-level agritourism pathways.

6.6 Digital Experience and Distribution

Focus: Strengthen the region's digital ecosystem to better showcase and connect agritourism experiences through existing platforms.

Purpose:

Reduce information fragmentation and improve discoverability of agritourism experiences by enhancing existing digital channels, aligned with broader regional tourism systems.

Actions:

- Continue to improve itinerary and trail content within existing platforms, ensuring consistency, quality and ease of navigation.
- Align with broader digital initiatives (e.g. AI-driven itinerary tools) where appropriate, rather than developing agritourism-specific platforms.
- Support operators to improve digital presence, product listings and bookability across relevant platforms (including ATDW).
- Ensure agritourism is prominent in key marketing campaigns and 'always-on' activity by continuing to build on agritourism-specific marketing content, including compelling photography, videography and visuals that help tell the producer stories of the region.

6.7 Agrifood Events and Activation

Focus: Support and strengthen agrifood events and activations that drive visitation and extend regional experiences.

Purpose:

Enhance the role of events in showcasing agritourism experiences and encouraging dispersal, without duplicating existing initiatives or requiring direct event delivery.

Actions:

- Support operators and event organisers to incorporate agritourism experiences into existing events and programs.
- Align agritourism experiences with major regional and state events (e.g. Melbourne Food and Wine Festival) where relevant.
- Encourage event-based packaging that links producers, trails and visitor experiences.
- Provide guidance, connections and promotional support to strengthen agrifood event outcomes.



7. Implementation Pathway

7.1 Delivery Approach

These delivery principles will guide implementation to ensure agritourism growth is practical, coordinated and sustainable across Greater Geelong, The Bellarine and the Moorabool Valley.

- Prioritise operator readiness with clear pathways through compliance and planning.
- Build on existing assets (e.g. Bellarine Taste Trail, TGGB platforms) before creating new structures.
- Focus on quality and bookability to increase yield (spend, length of stay) rather than volume alone.
- Adopt a 'one region, multiple sub-regional stories' approach, reflecting different maturity levels across the Bellarine and Moorabool Valley.
- Enable collaboration: packaging, cross-referral and shared storytelling across producers, tours, accommodation and events.
- Embed sustainability and Caring for Country in product development, messaging and partnerships as appropriate.

7.2 Governance, Roles and Partnerships

A clear governance structure will ensure the roadmap is coordinated, resourced and delivered effectively, with defined roles for TGGB, local government and industry partners.

Roadmap Sponsor (TGGB Management & Board):

Endorses priorities, secures resourcing, and receives progress reporting.

Roadmap Lead (TGGB Industry Development Programs lead):

Day-to-day coordination, partner management, reporting, and integration into TGGB's annual action plan.

Local Government Partners:

City of Greater Geelong, Borough of Queenscliffe, and Golden Plains Shire support planning pathways, business concierge links, infrastructure coordination and grant co-investment.

Industry Reference Group:

A small group of representative operators (different readiness stages and sub-regions) to validate practicality, provide feedback on tools, and support peer-to-peer uptake.

Operators:

Agritourism and visitor-economy operators in the region develop, deliver and continuously improve the visitor experiences that make up the region's agritourism offering and work with TGGB and others to lift quality, visibility and collaboration.

Delivery Partners:

Capability providers to assist in delivery of initiatives which can include training, digital, accessibility, event partners, and trade/PR partners.

Working groups (time-bound):

Short-term groups established for priority projects such as the Bellarine Taste Trail refresh, and Moorabool activation feasibility.

7.3 Phased implementation timeline (2026–2029)

This phased timeline provides a practical sequence for mobilising partners, delivering early wins and building capability over time, while allowing priorities to be refined as evidence and funding opportunities emerge:

Phase	Timeframe	Priority outputs
Phase 1: Mobilise	0–6 months	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Confirm initiative priorities, owners, and resourcing. • Commence Regional Product Inventory (baseline dataset + readiness tagging). • Scope Agritourism Entry Pathway (toolkit outline, workshop schedule, compliance pathway alignment with councils). • Initiate Bellarine Taste Trail refresh scoping (operator audit, gaps, priorities).
Phase 2: Deliver and lift quality	6–18 months	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Deliver Agritourism 101 workshops and targeted advisory (Stage 1–2 focus). • Improve digital distribution: ATDW listings uplift, bookability guidance, itinerary content improvements. • Complete Bellarine Taste Trail refresh (content, wayfinding priorities, themed itineraries, operator readiness actions). • Progress Funding Alignment Strategy with a view to submit at least one grant-ready project package. • Begin Moorabool Valley activation feasibility (identity, clusters, market fit, pilot activations).
Phase 3: Scale and package	18–36 months	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Move a cohort of operators into Stage 3–4 capability (trade-ready product, consistent quality standards). • Deliver packaging training and initiatives (cross-regional itineraries, accommodation/tour partnerships, event-linked packages). • Pilot and evaluate Moorabool Valley taste trail / maker activation approach (if viable) and expand based on outcomes.

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Deepen PR, trade and famil activity for export-ready experiences (subject to readiness). • Refresh the Product Inventory annually and re-prioritise initiatives based on evidence and demand.
--	--	--

7.4 Monitoring and evaluation

Monitoring and evaluation will help ensure the roadmap stays on track, demonstrates outcomes to partners and funders, and supports evidence-based decisions about where to prioritise effort over time.

- **Operator participation:** number of operators engaged (workshops, advisory).
- **Digital distribution:** number of operators with current ATDW listings, bookable products, and improved content (images, descriptions, trading hours).
- **Trail strength:** Bellarine Taste Trail participation, consistency standards achieved, and implementation of priority wayfinding/content actions.
- **Product development:** number of new or improved agritourism experiences launched (tours, farmgate, accommodation-linked experiences, maker workshops).
- **Capability uplift:** number of operators progressing stages (e.g., Stage 1→2, 2→3) and achieving agreed quality/bookability milestones.
- **Partnership outcomes:** number of collaborative packages/itineraries, trade relationships, and event-linked activations established.

7.5 Initiatives Summary

This summary consolidates the roadmap’s priority initiatives into clear leads, partners and near-term deliverables to support coordinated delivery and accountability.

Initiative	Lead / key partners	Actions
6.1 Agritourism Entry Pathway	TGGB Councils/business concierge + training providers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Toolkit outline and core templates (experience basics, compliance checklist, digital basics). • Workshop calendar and delivery model agreed. • Initial cohort engaged and supported (Stage 1–2).
6.2 Regional Product Inventory	TGGB Industry reference group Data partners (ATDW)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Baseline inventory compiled (operators, experience types, seasonality). • Readiness tagging applied (Stages 1–4) to identify uplift priorities.

Agritourism Road Map 2026-29

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Gap analysis summary to inform product development and investment asks.
6.3 Funding Alignment Strategy	TGGB Councils Regional development & state partners	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Funding calendar and eligibility map prepared. Priority 'grant-ready' project(s) packaged (scope, partners, budget, outcomes). At least one coordinated submission or co-investment pitch progressed.
6.4 Strengthen Bellarine Taste Trail	TGGB Trail operators Marketing/digital partners	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Trail audit completed (operators, content, consistency, wayfinding priorities). Themed itineraries drafted and priority content gaps addressed. Operator readiness uplift plan agreed (bookability, standards, 'next stop' messaging).
6.5 Moorabool Valley Taste Trail and Maker Activation	TGGB Golden Plains Shire Local operators & partners	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Identity and product clustering work commenced. Trail/activation feasibility assessment (readiness, market fit, demand drivers). Pilot activation concept(s) scoped (e.g., seasonal maker weekends, curated loops).
6.6 Digital Experience and Distribution	TGGB Digital/content partners ATDW support	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Agritourism positioned as a clearer content pillar in existing channels. ATDW listing uplift program initiated (priority cohort). Improved itinerary/trail navigation and content consistency implemented.
6.7 Agrifood Events and Activation	TGGB (Enable) Event organisers Operators and partners	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Event opportunities map (where agritourism can be layered into existing programs). Operator guidance and connections to support event-linked packaging. At least one pilot activation aligned to an existing event window.

APPENDICES

DRAFT

Appendix 1:

TGGB Agritourism Workshop - 25 November 2025

Discussion Paper & Summary of Outcomes

1. Workshop Overview

This paper summarises the discussion, ideas and priorities captured during the Greater Geelong & Bellarine agritourism workshop.

The session brought together operators and stakeholders from across Greater Geelong, the Bellarine and Moorabool Valley to:

- Take stock of existing agritourism assets and experiences
- Identify key barriers to growth
- Explore what differentiates the region within Victoria
- Brainstorm future themes, new experiences and enablers that can guide strategic planning

The workshop was structured around six core questions that participants worked through at their tables, supported by group report-backs and open discussion.

2. Workshop Objectives

The session was designed to:

1. **Assess the current state**
 - Identify existing agritourism products, events and experiences
 - Surface strengths and weaknesses in how these are currently delivered and promoted
2. **Understand barriers and challenges**
 - Explore what is getting in the way of agritourism progress today
3. **Identify future directions**
 - Clarify what differentiates the region from Mornington Peninsula and Yarra Valley
 - Define themes and ideas that could shape future agritourism development
4. **Capture enablers**
 - Identify what is needed to make these ideas a reality, including coordination, funding, advocacy and infrastructure

3. Current State: What We Already Have

Participants began by listing all existing agritourism-related assets, products and experiences across the region.

3.1 Primary Products and Producers

The region already has a strong base of primary production and value-added producers, including:

- **Wine and spirits**
 - Wineries and cellar doors
 - Distilleries and spirits producers
- **Dairy and specialty foods**
 - Cheese and butter
 - Other dairy products (with a note that there are dairy producers but limited “on-farm dairy” visitor experiences)

- **Seafood**
 - Mussels
 - Oysters
 - Abalone
- **Other producers**
 - Olive oil producers
 - Fungi and mushroom producers
 - A wide range of small and niche primary producers across the region

There was acknowledgement that in some categories (for example, dairy and cattle), production may exist but consumer-facing agritourism experiences are underdeveloped.

3.2 Experiences, Trails and Visitor Products

Participants highlighted a variety of existing visitor-facing experiences and platforms, including:

- **Signature experiences**
 - The Q Train as a hero product showcasing regional food and wine
 - Local markets that feature regional producers
- **Trails and campaigns**
 - Bellarine Taste Trail / Taste of the Bellarine
 - Taste of Greater Geelong
 - Various markets and tasting opportunities linked to agrifood
- **On-ground experiences**
 - Farm visits and emerging on-farm activities
 - Music events and community events that provide platforms for producers to sample and sell
 - Smaller, localised activations where producers can demonstrate how to use their products
- **Emerging operators**
 - Examples such as an equine and beef farm near Geelong exploring horse riding trails and potential visitor activities
 - Operators who currently have strong primary businesses and are considering or trialling agritourism offerings

3.3 Festivals and Events

The region hosts multiple festivals with food and drink components, including:

- Toast to the Coast
- Mussel Festival
- Taste of the Bellarine / Taste of Greater Geelong
- Celtic Festival in Portarlington
- Greek festival and other multicultural events that incorporate food, drink and cultural storytelling

Participants noted that:

- These events provide valuable platforms for small producers to reach new customers, run tastings and demonstrate product use.
- Multicultural events can form part of the agritourism story where they connect back to primary producers and local ingredients.

3.4 Regional Positioning and Infrastructure

The group recognised several structural advantages:

- **Diverse geography**
 - Bay beach and ocean beach access
 - Inland rural areas and coastal landscapes within short travel times

- The ability to experience “farm and sea” or inland and coast in a single day
- **Transport nodes**
 - Ferry terminal as a significant arrival point with untapped potential for stronger activation
 - Road, rail and ferry links that position the region as both close to Melbourne and a gateway to other iconic destinations (Great Ocean Road, Penguins, Twelve Apostles)

There was also discussion about the Great Ocean Road “skipping” much of Greater Geelong and the Bellarine, which was seen as both a challenge and an opportunity to better “loop in” the region.

3.5 Question: What Counts as Agritourism?

The workshop briefly surfaced a broader question:

- Do multicultural festivals and community events with food and drink components sit within agritourism?
- Consensus leaned towards inclusion when there is a clear connection back to primary producers, agriculture or local food and drink.

While a full definition was outside the scope of the session, participants agreed that it is useful to keep this question visible during planning.

4. Barriers and Challenges

The second part of the current-state discussion focused on what is getting in the way of agritourism progress across the region.

4.1 Staffing and Skills

- Difficulty finding staff remains a key barrier.
- Operators need people who can:
 - Run the experience itself
 - Communicate stories, values and provenance with passion
- There is a structural mismatch between:
 - Landowners who have production capacity but do not want to run visitor experiences
 - People who would like to run agritourism experiences but do not have access to land

Participants identified an opportunity to connect these two groups more deliberately.

4.2 Regulation, Planning and Compliance

Regulation and planning processes were raised repeatedly as major inhibitors, especially for small and emerging operators.

Examples included:

- Lengthy and complex council processes for small wineries and agritourism businesses attempting to start or expand operations.
- Perception that small rural developments are sometimes treated like large suburban developments.
- High upfront infrastructure requirements (for example, wastewater and septic systems) that can be prohibitive for modest, early-stage ventures.

Participants stressed that:

- The region is dominated by small businesses.
- Regulatory and compliance frameworks need to acknowledge this reality if new agritourism experiences are to emerge.

4.3 Destination Perception

- Some key visitor segments, particularly Melburnians, still have outdated perceptions of the region and do not see it clearly as a leading food and wine destination.
- Participants felt this is changeable, but it requires a clear and consistent positioning that differentiates the region from Mornington Peninsula and Yarra Valley.

4.4 Transport and Local Movement

- Once visitors arrive, moving around the region can be difficult, especially without a car.
- Challenges include:
 - Getting from the ferry or train to wineries and farm experiences
 - Travelling between venues in a way that feels simple and safe

Opportunities highlighted:

- Existing bus routes that already pass multiple wineries on the Bellarine could be re-framed and promoted as **wine or agritourism trails**.
- Bespoke tour options from arrival points (for example, calling an operator to arrange a personalised tour straight from the ferry).

4.5 Workforce Policy and Visas

- Constraints on 417 working holiday visas affect the ability of agritourism and hospitality businesses to meet seasonal staffing needs.
- Reference was made to Designated Area Migration Agreements (DAMAs) in other regions, which offer more flexible workforce arrangements.
- Participants noted that regions benefiting from these schemes enjoy a staffing advantage over Greater Geelong and the Bellarine.

4.6 Communications, Marketing and Networks

- The region has strong leadership and active groups, but smaller producers often feel they receive limited airtime in broader campaigns.
- Challenges include:
 - Fragmented communication channels
 - Lack of time and budget for small operators to engage with multiple groups or associations
 - Attention that was strong for some businesses when they first arrived in the region has since dropped away, with measurable impacts on visitation

Participants highlighted the need for:

- A more connected network that supports smaller operators.
- A “champion” or coordinating role (potentially within council or in partnership with existing groups) to advocate for agritourism and ensure producers are visible in destination marketing.

4.7 Accommodation

- There is a perceived gap in larger, resort-style accommodation, particularly on the Bellarine, comparable to RACV resort offerings in other regions.
- The region relies heavily on AirBnB and small accommodation options, which can limit group and conference-style visitation and multi-day packaging.

5. Strengthening What Exists and Identifying Gaps

Participants then discussed how to strengthen existing products and where the most obvious gaps and opportunities sit.

5.1 Innovation in Existing Offers

- There is strong appetite for **taking existing products to the next level**, through:
 - New experiences and add-ons
 - Extended trading times or seasonal offerings
 - Additional tasting rooms, retail spaces and cellar doors

Examples include:

- Smaller wineries building or upgrading cellar doors
- Producers opening tasting areas or shops
- Developing creative twists on current experiences rather than starting from scratch

5.2 Seasonal and Winter Activation

- Winter was identified as both a challenge and an opportunity.
- Participants saw potential in:
 - Winter activation programs aligned with periods such as Taste of Greater Geelong (June–July)
 - Offers such as mulled wine, hearty food, fireside tasting and other “cosy” experiences across the region

5.3 Building on Existing Festivals and Trails

Rather than abandoning or replacing current efforts, the group favoured:

- **Building on existing festivals**, such as:
 - “Taste of Greater Geelong” style events that could be elevated into major, pre-packaged, multi-day destination experiences.
- Collaborative work with accommodation providers to:
 - Pre-sell festival-and-stay packages
 - Encourage visitors to plan stays well in advance

5.4 Regional Providore / Permanent Shopfront

A strong concept emerged:

- A **permanent regional providore and visitor space**, potentially near an existing market, that would:
 - Host dedicated sections for different sub-regions (for example, Bellarine, Moorabool Valley, other Greater Geelong areas)
 - Display and sell regional agrifood products (wine, olive oil, preserves and more)
 - Act as a storytelling platform for agribusiness and agritourism experiences

Participants referenced examples from other regions where visitor centres double as retail and tasting spaces and felt a similar model would benefit Greater Geelong and the Bellarine.

6. Differentiators: What Sets the Region Apart?

Questions 5 and 6 asked:

- What can Greater Geelong and the Bellarine do that Mornington and Yarra Valley regions cannot?
- What themes could take us into the future?

6.1 City and Country in One Compact Region

Participants identified a key differentiator:

- The region combines a **major city** (Geelong) with:
 - Rural landscapes
 - Coastal experiences
 - Working farms and food bowl assets
- Within a short radius, visitors can access:
 - Laneways and historic precincts
 - Bay and ocean beaches
 - Arts, galleries and events
 - Vineyards, distilleries and farms

This “city-plus-country” mix within a compact geography was seen as a clear point of difference.

6.2 Small-Batch, Agile Producers

- Unlike some more commercial-scale regions, Greater Geelong and the Bellarine are:
 - Dominated by small, agile producers
 - Able to collaborate and respond quickly to new opportunities
- This enables:
 - High levels of direct contact between visitors and producers
 - Bespoke and responsive experiences that larger regions may struggle to deliver

6.3 Captured Audience and Strong Weekend Appeal

- Due to location and transport patterns:
 - Visitors coming from Melbourne are more likely to **stay overnight** than simply commute home.
 - There is a “captured audience” effect for weddings, events and festivals.

This was seen as a significant advantage for encouraging multi-day agritourism itineraries.

6.4 Multi-modal Access

The region is uniquely accessible by:

- Train
- Car
- Bus
- Ferry
- Plane (Avalon)
- Helicopter

This multi-modal access gives Greater Geelong and the Bellarine a strong case for:

- Short-break marketing
- Integrated transport-based experiences (for example, farm and sea itineraries linked to ferry arrivals)

6.5 Authentic, Rustic, Yet Connected

Participants agreed they were comfortable leaning into:

- Authenticity, rustic charm and openness, **without** giving up:

- Modern infrastructure, including the convention centre
- Arts and culture credentials
- UNESCO City of Design status

The group saw opportunity in connecting agritourism with:

- Arts and cultural programs
- Major events (for example, Cadel Evans Great Ocean Road Race, A Day on the Green, exhibitions such as the Archibald Prize)

7. Future Themes

Participants identified several themes that could frame the region’s agritourism strategy.

7.1 Accessible Makers

- Core idea: **access to the maker**
 - Visitors can meet the winemaker, distiller, farmer, fisher or grower.
 - Hosts are visible, present and engaged.

This theme plays to the region’s strengths in small, hands-on, story-rich producers.

7.2 Digital Connectivity and Multi-channel Information

- The region as a **smart, connected destination**, including:
 - An app or digital platform showing what is on, what is open and when
 - Real-time and seasonal information about experiences, events and trails
- Recognised need for multiple layers:
 - Digital tools plus physical maps, signage and printed guides

7.3 Hidden Gems and Unique Flavours

- Theme built around discovery, “hidden gems” and unique flavours, including:
 - Instagrammable spots
 - Less-known producers and places beyond hero venues
 - Strong focus on provenance and local ingredients

7.4 Farm and Sea / Inland and Coast

- A compelling theme linking:
 - Inland farms, vineyards and rural landscapes
 - Coastal and marine experiences (seafood, diving, marine farming)
- The ability for visitors to experience both in one day or over a short stay was seen as a headline differentiator.

8. New Experience Ideas

Groups then explored what new experiences could be developed, building on existing strengths.

8.1 Seasonal Producer and Grower Events

- Seasonal events combining producers and growers, with strong land and sea integration.
- Focus on:
 - Education and learning (for example, how products are grown and made)
 - Visitor participation in harvests, tastings and production activities

8.2 Expanded Markets, Masterclasses and Hands-on Learning

- Broader program of:
 - Markets and regional showcases
 - Cooking classes, tasting sessions and how-to-use workshops
 - Education-led agritourism that deepens visitor understanding of local food and drink

8.3 First Nations and Cultural Connections

- First Nations experiences identified as highly important, acknowledging:
 - Strong cultural and land connections
 - Potential synergy with agritourism where appropriate

8.4 Heritage and Marine Agritourism

- Railway heritage experiences where historic rail lines and stories are used to frame food and produce routes.
- Marine agritourism, including:
 - Diving and boat tours showcasing marine environments and aquaculture
 - “From the bottom up” perspectives on marine food production

8.5 Event-linked Itineraries and Tiered Packages

- Linking major regional events with agritourism packages, for example:
 - Visitors attending a major exhibition or concert, then staying on for curated agrifood experiences.
- Tiered packages that:
 - Cater to budget-conscious visitors and high-end travellers
 - Combine accommodation, food, drink and activities into bookable itineraries

8.6 Concierge and Industry “Speed-dating”

- Idea that all operators become **concierges for each other**:
 - Every venue can recommend “where to go next” with confidence.
- Suggestion to run a **speed-dating style industry event**:
 - To help operators learn about each other’s products
 - To create a shared regional message and encourage cross-referral

8.7 Elevating Existing Platforms

Participants emphasised:

- The importance of building on existing assets such as:
 - Bellarine Taste Trail
 - Tourism Greater Geelong & The Bellarine platforms
- Aspirations for the trail to become:
 - A world-class, Tourism Australia–international ready product
 - Featuring timed, bookable and curated experiences, rather than only static listings

Ideas included:

- A **Taste Trail bus** or hop-on-hop-off service.
- A model inspired by the **Irish Whiskey Trail**, where:
 - The trail is visible at airports and across the country
 - Visitors receive passports and simple, compelling ways to engage.
- “Choose your own adventure” itineraries from Avalon, with options such as:
 - Cherries and berries
 - Wine and spirits
 - Mixed food experiences
- Mystery tour packages where visitors purchase a curated day without knowing the exact itinerary in advance.

8.8 Digital Calendar and Route-planning Tools

- An online visual event calendar showing:
 - Events, seasonal activities and experiences by month
 - Clear views of what is happening on any given weekend
- An interactive Taste Trail map that allows visitors to:
 - Select preferred producers
 - Generate a suggested route with travel times and stay durations
- A potential regional chatbot to:
 - Help visitors plan days out
 - Surface events and experiences tailored to their interests

9. Enablers

The session concluded with a focus on what is needed to enable these ideas.

9.1 Coordination and Product Development

Participants identified a strong need for:

- **Better coordination** across the region’s agritourism ecosystem, including:
 - Frequent industry engagement and planning
 - Clear roles for existing groups and initiatives
- A dedicated **product development or coordination role** to:
 - Work directly with operators
 - Package experiences into export-ready products
 - Connect sub-regions and sectors into coherent stories

There was recognition that:

- Many elements already exist; the main challenge is connecting and amplifying them.

9.2 Funding and Infrastructure

- Funding and infrastructure were seen as foundation enablers, including:
 - Grants and investment from council, state and federal government
 - Infrastructure that supports access and movement (for example, enhanced trails, integrated transport links)
- Activation of existing commitments such as:
 - State funding for high-speed rail between Geelong and Melbourne

The group felt that strategic infrastructure could “join the dots” between Bellarine, Moorabool Valley, Barwon and other areas, making agritourism easier to experience.

9.3 Advocacy and Trade Engagement

Participants emphasised the importance of:

- **Stronger advocacy** with:
 - Tourism Australia
 - Visit Victoria
 - Other state and federal agencies

Key points:

- Some international media and trade visits bypass Geelong entirely enroute to other icons.
- There is a need to bring:
 - Larger tourism bodies
 - Economic development teams
 - Foreign delegationsinto direct contact with regional producers, not only large industrial businesses.

9.4 Digital Tools and Data

- Investment in:
 - Event calendars
 - Route-planning tools
 - Chatbots and other digital services

These tools would:

- Make it easier for visitors to find and book experiences.
- Help the region present a cohesive, up-to-date picture of what is available.

9.5 Education and Audience Development

- Opportunities to engage:
 - Deakin students and other tertiary cohorts as both visitors and advocates
 - Agricultural education providers (for example, agricultural colleges) in agritourism activity
- Seen as an additional layer that can support long-term growth and awareness.

10. Next Steps

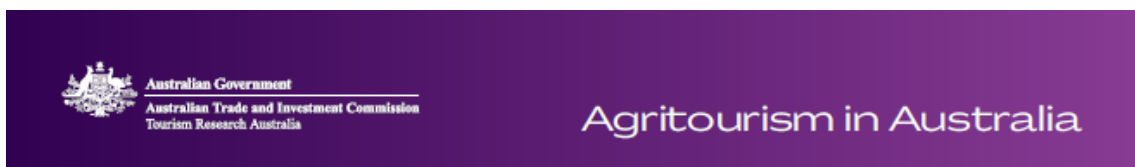
Based on the workshop discussion, the immediate next steps are:

1. **Synthesis and Pathway Development**
 - Consolidate worksheets, recordings and notes into a draft agritourism pathway for Greater Geelong and the Bellarine.
 - Capture:
 - Current-state assessment
 - Differentiating themes
 - Priority experience concepts
 - Enablers and recommended focus areas
2. **Review and Refinement**
 - Tourism Greater Geelong & The Bellarine to review the pathway document (in process).

- Confirm strategic priorities, scope and resourcing for next-stage work (in process).
- 3. **Feedback to Participants**
 - Circulate:
 - Workshop slide deck (complete)
 - Relevant research references and studies mentioned in the session (complete)
 - Any additional resources, including the tourism research podcast episode referred to in the workshop (complete).
- 4. **Ongoing Industry Engagement**
 - Explore follow-up workshops or working groups focusing on:
 - Product development and packaging
 - Digital tools and trails
 - Advocacy and coordination

DRAFT

Appendix 2: Tourism Research Australia Report



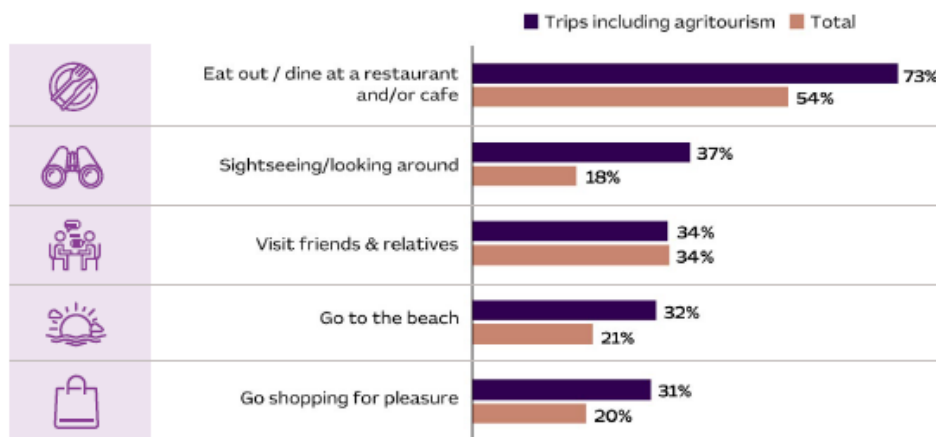
This Tourism Research Australia (TRA) report, in conjunction with Tourism Australia (TA), uses the latest TRA and TA data to measure and evaluate agritourism, track growth and measure impact.

In 2024, trips involving one or more agritourism activity accounted for:



Activities

Travellers that engaged in agritourism engage in a higher number of trip activities compared with the average, pointing to the opportunity for businesses to pair experiences with agritourism activities in the area.





Agritourism in Australia

International visitors engaging with agritourism

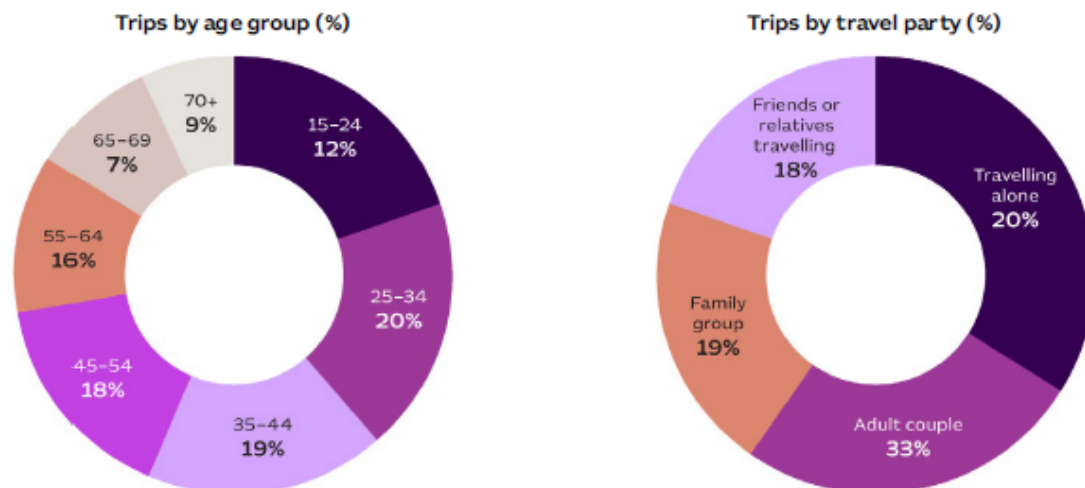
United Kingdom, China, and United States accounted for 1 in 3 international trips that include agritourism and \$1 in \$3 dollars spent in Australia by international visitors on trips involving agritourism. In 2024, these 3 markets contributed \$1.8b to Australia through trips that included agritourism.

Top 5 markets of origin for agritourism

	Visitors (000)	Expenditure (\$M)
United Kingdom	168,033	\$739
China	143,444	\$506
United States of America	138,078	\$512
New Zealand	122,552	\$290
Korea	116,116	\$491

Trip demographics

A broad-based demand for agritourism among various age groups and travel parties has the potential to attract a diverse audience, contributing to the growth and prosperity of agritourism and surrounding regions.



Read the full Agritourism in Australia Report at tra.gov.au

Data sources

- Tourism Research Australia, International Visitor Survey (NVS and IVS)

Data may not sum to 100% for all measures due to rounding and visitors can visit more than one location and/or experienced more than one activity. Updated October 2025.

Prepared by Tourism Research Australia, Australian Trade and Investment Commission (Austrade).

Web: www.tra.gov.au. Enquiries welcome at: tourism.research@tra.gov.au