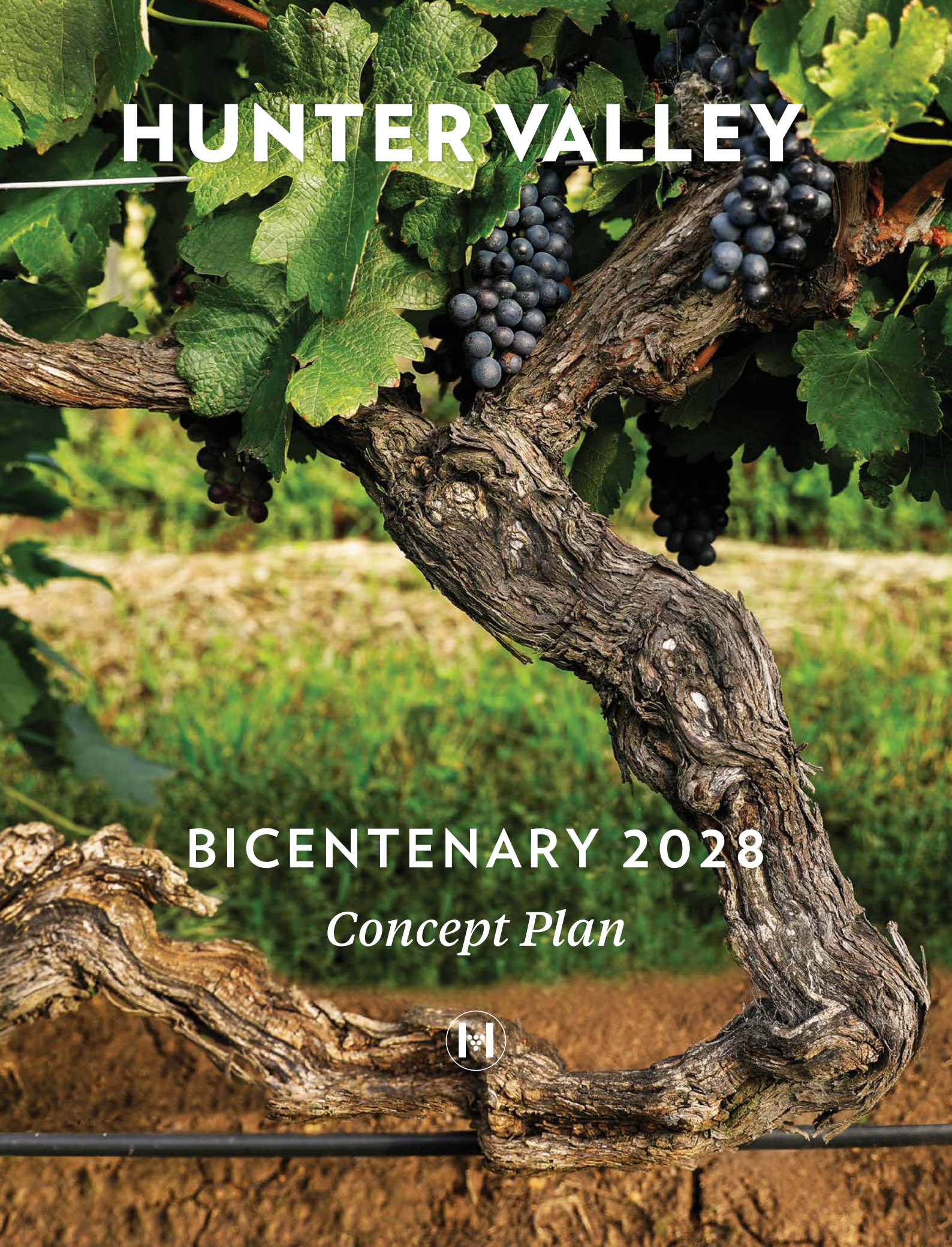


HUNTER VALLEY



BICENTENARY 2028

Concept Plan



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WELCOME TO COUNTRY

We acknowledge the people of the Wonnarua Nation as the Traditional Custodians of the land we operate on. We recognise their continuing connection to the land and waters and thank them for protecting this country and its ecosystems since time immemorial. We pay our respects to Elders past and present and extend that respect to all First Nations people.

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VISION

The Hunter Valley Bicentenary in 2028 will be a celebration to mark 200 years of viticulture and winemaking heritage in Australia's oldest and most prestigious wine region.

The landmark celebrations will be designed to honour the region's rich history and contribution to the Australian wine industry.

The Bicentenary is significant as it highlights the Hunter Valley's evolution from its early days of viticulture to its current status as a leading wine destination, renowned for its exceptional Semillon, Chardonnay and Shiraz.

This celebration not only pays tribute to the pioneers of Australian winemaking but also underscores the region's ongoing influence and innovation in the global wine market. This is critical as the region's industry looks toward the next 200 years and ensuring it continues to resonate with future generations.

AMBITION

Proud of our heritage and committed to a sustainable future, Hunter Valley Wine Country will use the Bicentenary to:

- › Celebrate the people, pioneers, vineyards and stories that shaped Australian wine
- › Protect and elevate our heritage vineyards and landscapes
- › Strengthen industry capability and prepare for future challenges
- › Create high-impact reasons for visitation, investment, and global attention
- › Inspire and develop the next generation of Australian winemakers
- › Position and brand Hunter Valley Wine Country as a world-leading premium wine destination

Investment will deliver a legacy that endures beyond 2028:

- › Protected vineyards and cultural landscapes
- › National Heritage Listing and a UNESCO-aligned pathway
- › Improved visitor infrastructure and visitor economy
- › A stronger, more resilient industry
- › New annual events and festivals launched from Bicentenary foundations
- › A digital and physical archive of the region's story
- › A more skilled, future-focused wine and tourism workforce
- › Hunter Valley Wine Country brand sustainability



Iain Riggs
Chair, Bicentenary
Committee



Chris Tyrrell
President, Hunter Valley
Wine & Tourism Association



Jennie Curran
CEO, Hunter Valley
Wine & Tourism Association



*Scan to learn
more about the
Bicentenary*

AIMS OF THE CONCEPT PLAN

IDENTIFY OPPORTUNITIES TO:

- Celebrate the Bicentenary in a way that honours its legacy and shares the unique story of its history and heritage, including those who have been integral to making it
- Leverage the celebration to profile Hunter Valley Wine Country and showcase its contribution to the Australian wine industry and attracting national and international attention
- Create a pathway and sense of optimism to ensure the Hunter Valley remains a premier wine destination for future generations and to safeguard the region's historic vines and sense of place
- Attract investment and funding to further elevate the region's wine industry, brand, reputation and contribution to a vibrant regional economy
- Deliver on the NSW Government's strategic approach to growing the visitor economy as well as Wine Australia's strategies to increase global recognition of, and demand for, premium Australian wine and strengthen industry capability.



THEMES & AUDIENCES

Our approach will be based on an understanding of the interests, motivations, behaviours and needs of each audience to deliver a dynamic and engaging program of activities for the Bicentenary.

OUR CONCEPT PLAN IS UNDERPINNED BY THREE PRIMARY THEMES:

1

CELEBRATE AND PROTECT OUR LEGACY

Honouring our past, our old vines, our pioneers and our unique terroir.

2

CREATE OPPORTUNITIES FOR THE FUTURE

Building capability, diversifying experiences, innovating across viticulture, wine and tourism, and future-proofing the region.

3

COLLABORATE TO GROW AND PROSPER

Harnessing strong regional partnerships across government, industry, tourism, education and community.

THE AUDIENCES FOR THE BICENTENARY ARE:

- › Hunter Valley Wine Country's wine and tourism industry
- › Australian wine media and trade
- › International wine media and trade
- › Lifestyle and travel media
- › Future consumers of Hunter Valley wine
- › Future domestic and international visitors to Hunter Valley Wine Country
- › Local community
- › Hunter region industry partners

PROPOSED ACTIVITIES

The activities have been aligned to the three themes outlined above and informed by the context for an evolving and dynamic sector. This is designed to enable a program of activities in the lead up to and during 2028.

OUR FOCUS FOR THE CONCEPT PLAN IS BASED AROUND:

- › Recognising legends who, and brands that have, created the legacy
- › Leveraging existing events and activities
- › Generating high value visitation
- › Long-term brand security

ATTRACTING INVESTMENT AND FUNDING FOR:

- › Specific events and activities to celebrate and promote the Bicentenary
- › Creating opportunities for the future, including (but not limited to) building industry capability, encouraging innovation, delivering new infrastructure and consumer-led experiences, and ensuring the ongoing protection of the region's viticulture and vineyard heritage as well as its sense of place.
- › Involving the region's wine and tourism industry as well as the local community

PHASED PROGRAM OVER THREE YEARS

The program has been devised across three phases aligned to each calendar year: 2026, 2027, and 2028. The phases are explained below:



PROPOSED ACTIVITIES

PROPOSED 2028 SIGNATURE EVENTS PROGRAM

EVENT	FOCUS & PRIMARY AUDIENCES
> INTERNATIONAL MASTERS OF WINE SYMPOSIUM – REGIONAL VISIT PROGRAM	Hosting a regional 3-day visit in the Hunter Valley as part of the 2027 Institute of Masters of Wine International Symposium in Adelaide to build international certification of the region’s significance from the world’s most respected wine experts AUDIENCE: International Masters of Wine & international wine trade FOCUS: Immersive vineyard and winery visit OUTCOME: International understanding of Hunter Valley Semillon and its global significance, better understanding of the styles of Hunter Valley Shiraz and Hunter Valley Chardonnay. Explore the balance between heritage and modern innovation through access to producers and vineyard sites. TIME: April 2027
> 2028 VINTAGE LAUNCH	To kick start the Bicentenary, a celebration of Vintage28 including traditional Indigenous Smoking Ceremony at Cote vineyard, showcasing the fermenter restoration project. Backstage in the Hunter Valley - trade familiarisation program. This will be a “hands-on” experience, assisting with grape sampling and picking, winery grape processing, fermentation rounds, pump overs and tastings of hero back vintages. AUDIENCE: Local industry, Sydney & SE Queensland trade buyers FOCUS: Official launch; cultural performance; First Nations welcome; heritage storytelling, immersive vineyard and winery program OUTCOME: Improved trade engagement that builds loyalty and long-term commercial relationships TIME: February – March 2028
> “200 YEARS OF HUNTER VALLEY & AUSTRALIAN WINE” - GALA DINNER AT DALWOOD ESTATE	A night of celebration and fundraising leveraging the existing Legends Award annual event, showcasing the best of Hunter wine and food prepared by regional award-winning chefs. AUDIENCE: Local industry, corporate partners, international and domestic media, national and state MPs FOCUS: Celebration of founders and future leaders and formal recognition of the region’s significance OUTCOME: A marquee national event with media, political and cultural impact. TIME: May 2028

EVENT	FOCUS & PRIMARY AUDIENCES
› OPEN WEEKEND FOR THE LOCAL COMMUNITY	Themed “choose your adventure” pathways (history trail, food trail, family-friendly, behind-the-scenes) to explore the wineries and produce of Hunter Valley Wine Country – collaboration with Cessnock City & Singleton Councils. Consider link to Vivid Festival – ‘vivid in the vines’ AUDIENCE: Local community FOCUS: Tailored activities designed to engage with local market OUTCOME: Strong community goodwill and social licence. TIME: May 2028
› FOOD FIGHT - MAURICE O'SHEA BICENTENARY EDITION	For the Bicentenary year, the Food Fight - one of the Hunter Culinary Association’s flagship events - will be reimagined into region-defining culinary celebration honouring the legacy of Maurice O’Shea, one of the most influential figures in Australian wine and gastronomy. This special 2028 edition will bring together leading Hunter Valley chefs to create dishes inspired by O’Shea’s pioneering approach to flavour and regional produce. AUDIENCE: Food and wine lovers (local and domestic), media, influencers and food writers, local community supporters FOCUS: Celebrate Maurice O’Shea’s culinary legacy through reinterpretations of his iconic dishes. Elevate the Hunter Valley’s position as a leading food and wine destination. OUTCOME: Stronger Culinary Positioning; Reinforces the Hunter Valley as one of Australia’s top food and wine regions, adding depth to the Bicentenary narrative. TIME: June 2028
› HUNTER 200 FESTIVAL	The Hunter 200 Festival will be the flagship consumer event of the Bicentenary year - a vibrant two-day celebration held across Hunter Valley Wine Country that brings together wineries, restaurants, artisans, musicians, growers, and the local community, inspired by the Hunter Uncorked event series. Taking place during one of the most popular visitation periods, the festival will activate multiple precincts and invite visitors to explore the region in new and meaningful ways. Designed to showcase 200 years of heritage alongside the innovation shaping the next era of Hunter Valley wine, the festival will hero cellar door experiences, vineyard events, outdoor dining, long table feasts, workshops, live music, artisan markets and immersive trails. AUDIENCE: Domestic travellers, interstate visitors, families and groups, local community, and food and wine enthusiasts. FOCUS: Cellar door activations, long lunches, vineyard open days, outdoor concerts, wine trails OUTCOME: High-value visitation, regional dispersal TIME: October 2028

EVENT	FOCUS & PRIMARY AUDIENCES
› NEXT GEN CONSUMER EVENT + FUTURE WINE FORUM	Consumer event showcasing the Hunter Valley’s small, independent winemakers celebrating the region’s next wave of producers and Future Wine Forum featuring workshops and masterclasses as well as sustainability-focused events. AUDIENCE: Students, universities, early-career winemakers, Gen Z/ millennial audiences FOCUS: Innovation, climate resilience, sustainability, technology OUTCOME: Strengthening the pipeline of future talent and learn about the region’s work in sustainable winemaking and adaptability in the face of climate variability.
› OLD VINE CONFERENCE - FIELD TRIP	The Old Vine Conference has become a transformative force in the wine world, fostering awareness, innovation, and action. The initiative is designed to galvanize the global wine community, celebrate heritage, and secure a sustainable future for old vines. Opportunity to include Hunter Valley and Australia as a field trip in 2028 which could incorporate an “Old Vine Accord” - a declaration signed by partners committing to preservation. AUDIENCE: International wine trade, media, academics FOCUS: Heritage vines, provenance, viticulture, sustainability OUTCOME: Thought leadership positioning + UNESCO foundations PARTNERS: Wine Australia, leading universities, Barossa Australia, AWRI
› 2028 NSW WINE AWARDS	Open discussion with NSW Wine to host the 2028 NSW Wine Awards in the Hunter Valley and consider options to leverage the reputation of Len Evans Tutorial. AUDIENCE: Domestic wine trade and media FOCUS: Winemaking excellence OUTCOME: Improved engagement and loyalty for NSW wine PARTNERS: NSW Wine Industry Association & Destination NSW
› OUT-OF-REGION POP-UP IMMERSIVE ACTIVATIONS	Out-of-Region Immersive Activations • Pop-ups in key target locations of Sydney & Newcastle • Immersive experiences showcasing Hunter Valley hero varietals, Semillon, Shiraz, Chardonnay • “Semillon Shack” installations (inspired by Rosé Mansion in New York) at iconic locations • Co-branded and supported by partners TIME: 2028

BRANDING, MARKETING & PROMOTION

BRANDING

DESCRIPTION	WHEN
› Prepare a 2026 - 2028 Marketing and Campaign Strategy for the Bicentenary, based on the phases of implementation. It will be inclusive of: • Simple brand mark or identity and positioning to guide the program of activities and that could be used on an endorsed series of 2028 Bicentenary vintage releases. • Key messages to promote the Bicentenary. Key messages can be utilised by HVWTA as well as industry leaders (Ambassadors) and other key stakeholders. • Public relations (PR) plan that builds excitement from 2026 through to 2028 – this should consider the use of social media influencers as well as famils across both traditional wine media (trade) and lifestyle/travel media – collaborate with Destination NSW (DNSW), Tourism Australia, Wine Australia, NSW Wine to coordinate opportunities.	Planning from 2026 Implementation from 2027 - 2028
› Over arching Hunter Valley brand strategy and review including industry consultation, brand, content and channel review, creative development and brand identity.	2026

MARKETING & PROMOTION

DESCRIPTION	WHEN
› HERITAGE TRAILS & STORYTELLING INFRASTRUCTURE • Interactive map of the HVWC infused with stories of the region's wine history and legends – linked to the 2028 vintage. • Augmented or virtual reality (AR or VR) vineyard tours and/or create a virtual reality (VR) wine cellar experience that takes guests on a journey through the winemaking process from grape to bottle. • Hunter Wine book – re-print Bicentenary edition. <i>Behind the book</i> event with Dr Julie McIntyre	2026 onwards
› ARCHIVAL & ORAL HISTORY PROJECTS Preserve stories and memories from growers, winemakers, families and communities. Update of Dr Julie McIntyre's project – Vines, Wines & Identity to deliver podcast series.	2026 onwards
› LA CITÉ DU VIN EXHIBITION Explore partnership for the Hunter Valley with La Cité du Vin - the world-renowned wine museum in Bordeaux, France which attracts thousands of visitors each year.	2026 for activation in 2028

MARKETING & PROMOTION CONTINUED

DESCRIPTION	WHEN
› REGIONAL ACTIVATIONS • Newcastle Museum exhibition of the history of Hunter Wine (based on Dr Julie McIntyre's research) • Wine Label design school, Newcastle University exhibition and historic wine labels in conjunction with the wine school.	2026 for activation in 2028
› HUNTER VALLEY DIGITAL WINE ARCHIVE A living, evolving repository of vineyard data, heritage maps and winemaking records.	2026 onwards
› CONSUMER EXPERIENCES Work with wineries and visitor economy operators to develop, package and promote consumer-led experiences – including for any cooperative marketing campaigns as well as to promote from 2027 and throughout 2028. This could include bundling of wine experiences, events, workshops or masterclasses with accommodation, transport, or other experiences	Commence planning in 2026
› ULTIMATE WINE OCCASION PACKS Create and commission the Ultimate Wine Occasion Packs, which provides a selection of six smaller sized bottles each matched to a wine occasion. For example, to match selected occasions such as Outdoor Mid-tempo (BBQ), Relax @ home with friends, Special occasion/gift, etc. This could be packaged with other produce and promoted through the pop-up activations as well as sold during the 2028 event series.	Commence planning in 2026

‘LEAVING A LEGACY’ PROJECTS: PROTECTING OUR HERITAGE

DESCRIPTION	WHEN
› FERMENTER RESTORATION PROJECT Recommissioning of old concrete fermenters with vision of young winemaking teams making wines for judging and sale in 2028.	Planning underway
› HERITAGE VINEYARD PROTECTION The Hunter Valley is Australia’s oldest continuously producing wine region, with vineyard landscapes that demonstrate rare continuity from the early 1800s to today. These landscapes are not just agricultural—they are cultural, historical and environmental assets of national significance. Gaining National Heritage Listing for the Hunter Valley and sub-regions of Pokolbin and Broke-Fordwich will protect this legacy for future generations and position the Hunter Valley for a long-term pathway toward UNESCO World Heritage recognition. OUTCOMES: National heritage listing by August 2026, foundational work for future UNESCO pursuit.	See separate scope of work
› VINE & GENETIC DIVERSITY PRESERVATION Partnering with AWRI on the research project ‘Genetic diversity of Australian heritage wine, grapevine germplasm project’.	Funding applied for via Wine Australia
› ROTHBURY CEMETERY RESTORATION Potential restoration of the Rothbury and Glenmore Cemeteries	2027
› HERITAGE TRAIL ACTIVATION Immersive digital storytelling installation at Pokolbin Park to provide an engaging and contemporary way for visitors to connect with the region’s cultural and viticultural heritage.	2027 onwards

‘LEAVING A LEGACY’ PROJECTS: LOOKING TO THE FUTURE

DESCRIPTION	WHEN
› BIKE TRAIL NETWORK - SHIRAZ TO SHORE CONCEPT PLAN Collaborate with Cessnock City Council, Singleton Council and other key stakeholders to prepare and submit a grant funding proposal to develop a detailed masterplan and construct (or upgrade) high priority sections of the bike trail network within and connecting Hunter Valley Wine Country – leverage and align with the broader Shiraz to Shore Concept Plan (commissioned by Hunter Joint Organisation) focusing on those sections that are achievable and would contribute to the overall visitor perception and experience of the Hunter Valley.	Commence planning and grant proposal in 2025 <i>(Implementation subject to outcome of grant process)</i>
› HUNTER VALLEY WINE COUNTRY SHUTTLE SERVICE Develop a proposal and seek funding for the implementation of a HVWC Shuttle Service to operate across the Hunter Valley (eg between wineries and visitor economy operators) as well as a regular service to link Newcastle Airport and the Hunter Valley. The model should consider options including introduction of a user-pay fee as well as industry contributions to match any grant funding or sponsorship. This should consider insights on this initiative included in the Hunter Joint Organisation’s Hunter Global Tourism Business Case and Hunter Export-Ready Tourism Marketing Strategy.	Commence planning and grant proposal in 2025 <i>(Implementation subject to outcome of grant process)</i>
› INNOVATION & SUSTAINABILITY HUB Partner with universities to drive research into regenerative viticulture, water, and climate adaptation	Commence planning in 2026
› VISITOR EXPERIENCE INFRASTRUCTURE Significant improvements in signage, cycling trails, accessibility and digital interpretation.	2027 onwards
› NEXT CROP WINE INDUSTRY LEADERSHIP AND CAPABILITY PROGRAM A tailored Hunter Valley Next Crop program will directly address these challenges by building leadership capability, strategic confidence and cross wine industry collaboration, whilst also enabling participants to work together on practical, region-specific challenge projects. The program will create a sustainable leadership pipeline that strengthens both individuals, their businesses and the collective future of the Hunter Valley.	2026 <i>(Dependent on grant funding outcome)</i>

ATTRACTING INVESTMENT & FUNDING

The Hunter Valley Bicentenary is a significant opportunity to secure long-term economic, cultural and environmental benefits for NSW. With the Hunter Valley recognised as the birthplace of Australian wine - and one of the state's most important visitor economy destinations - strategic investment in 2028 will deliver lasting value well beyond the anniversary year.

The Bicentenary is a catalyst for future growth, helping protect a nationally significant landscape while strengthening the state's global reputation for premium wine, world-class tourism experiences and sustainable regional development.

WHY INVESTMENT IS NEEDED

1. PROTECTING IRREPLACEABLE HERITAGE ASSETS

The Hunter Valley's heritage vineyards - some more than a century old - are living cultural assets. Investment will:

- › Progress the region's National Heritage Listing submission (August 2026 deadline)
 - › Safeguard old-vine blocks and viticultural landscapes
 - › Establish the foundations for UNESCO recognition over the coming decade
 - › Support long-term sustainability, genetic diversity and cultural storytelling
-

2. SUPPORTING A WORLD-CLASS VISITOR ECONOMY

The Hunter Valley is one of NSW's strongest regional visitor economies. Investment will:

- › Drive new reasons to visit throughout 2028
 - › Extend stays, increase midweek visitation and stimulate shoulder seasons
 - › Support precinct activation, dispersal and local business growth
 - › Strengthen alignment with NSW Visitor Economy Strategy 2030 targets
 - › Position brand as a 'must visit' destination
-

3. BUILDING INDUSTRY CAPABILITY AND FUTURE TALENT

The Bicentenary is an ideal platform to:

- › Grow the next generation of winemakers, viticulturists and tourism professionals
 - › Accelerate upskilling across sustainability, regenerative agriculture, storytelling and visitor experience design
 - › Strengthen research partnerships with universities and industry bodies
 - › Improve long-term competitiveness and resilience
-

4. ATTRACTING GLOBAL ATTENTION AND TRADE OPPORTUNITY

Investment in world-class events, international media weeks and global PR will:

- › Position the Hunter Valley as a global leader in heritage wine tourism
 - › Strengthen international trade relationships
 - › Boost exports of premium NSW wine
 - › Attract high-yield international travellers and inbound markets
-

ECONOMIC & SOCIAL RETURN ON INVESTMENT

The Bicentenary of the Hunter Valley Wine Region aligns directly with the strategic priorities of the NSW and Australian Governments across tourism, heritage, agriculture, cultural policy, and international trade. As a nationally significant milestone, the Bicentenary serves as a platform to activate government strategies, deliver measurable economic impact, and strengthen the state and nation's global reputation for premium wine, regional tourism and world-class experiences.

Investment in the Bicentenary will deliver measurable benefits:

1 VISITOR ECONOMY IMPACT

- Increased visitor expenditure in 2028 in line with NSW Visitor Economy targets
- Growth in midweek and off-peak travel
- Higher yield per visitor through premium wine and food experiences
- Increased length of stay across subregions
- Boost to accommodation, hospitality, events and attractions

2 REGIONAL EMPLOYMENT

- Job creation across hospitality, events, marketing, research and tourism
- Long-term workforce development through training & skills programs

3 INDUSTRY GROWTH & COMPETITIVENESS

- Increased cellar door visitation and wine sales
- Stronger export market connections
- Enhanced producer capability and resilience

4 CULTURAL LANDSCAPES & HERITAGE PROTECTION

- Preservation of old-vine blocks for future generations
- National and international recognition of the region's cultural significance

5 INTERNATIONAL PROFILE

- Major uplift in global media exposure
- Stronger partnerships with international wine and tourism bodies



FUNDING PRIORITIES

Investment will support a coordinated, three-year program across the following six pillars:



KEY INITIATIVES	INDICATIVE COSTS	KEY CONSIDERATIONS
> IMW SYMPOSIUM - REGIONAL VISIT	\$30,000	Within existing budgets
> 2028 VINTAGE LAUNCH EVENT	\$40,000	There is an opportunity to seek investment or industry contributions to enable the restoration project, ideally based on a business case that provides a positive ROI through sales of the 2028 vintage wines.
> GALA DINNER	\$200,000	Ticket price to cover some of the costs of the event, will require up-front investment to be recouped for costs relating to venue, marquee and costs for hosting international media.
> OPEN WEEKEND FOR THE LOCAL COMMUNITY	\$15,000	Ticket price to cover the costs of the event or offered in-kind by industry/participating wineries. Will require upfront investment for marketing and promotional activity.

KEY INITIATIVES	INDICATIVE COSTS	KEY CONSIDERATIONS
> HUNTER 200 FESTIVAL	\$200,000	Ticket price to contribute to the costs of the event or offered in-kind by industry/ participating wineries with potential for their sales revenue to cover operational costs associated with the events. Will require upfront investment to cover costs relating to event management, event activation and logistics and marketing and promotional activities.
> NEXT GEN WINE OCCASION	\$70,000	• Symposium – seek funding from Wine Australia and potential for sponsorship + ticket sales • Dinner – potential to collaborate with NSW Wine as part of hosting the 2028 NSW Wine Awards in HVWC. • Contract event organiser in 2025 to scope event, develop detailed budget and identify revenue and sponsorship opportunities.
> OLD VINE CONFERENCE - FIELD TRIP	TBC	
> POP-UP ACTIVATIONS	\$50,000	Would need to consider contracting an event organizer as well as opportunities for in-kind contributions and sponsorship.
> HUNTER VALLEY BRAND STRATEGY AND VISUAL IDENTITY DEVELOPMENT	\$200,000	Including brand strategy review, content strategy review and development of new visual identity.
> HUNTER VALLEY BRAND CAMPAIGN LAUNCH	\$200,000	PR and media campaign to launch new brand identity.
> ULTIMATE WINE OCCASION PACKS	\$10,000	To be negotiated, packaged and priced for sale with a % of profit or to contribute to other Bicentenary activities

KEY INITIATIVES	INDICATIVE COSTS	KEY CONSIDERATIONS
› SAFEGUARDING AND ONGOING PROTECTION OF THE REGION'S VITICULTURE AND VINEYARD HERITAGE AND SENSE OF PLACE	Refer separate project plan	The range of activities identified would need to be prioritised prior to developing a business case or grant application for all agreed initiatives. Several initiatives would require close cooperation and collaboration with Cessnock City and Singleton Councils, potentially leveraging existing Council priorities (for example, gateway and greenspace beautification/upgrades). Other initiatives may receive support via grant programs or industry contributions.
› DETAILED MASTER PLAN AND CONSTRUCT (OR UPGRADE) HIGH PRIORITY SECTIONS OF THE BIKE TRAIL NETWORK WITHIN AND CONNECTING HUNTER VALLEY WINE COUNTRY	\$500,000 - \$1M for detailed master plan of priority sections	Commence by collaborating with Cessnock City and Singleton Councils to determine priority sections to deliver by 2028. Engage a contractor to develop a detailed master plan for those sections. Prepare and submit a grant funding proposal for construction – consider the opportunity of the renewable energy transformation or regional economic development grant programs to attract investment.
› HUNTER VALLEY WINE COUNTRY SHUTTLE SERVICE	\$100,000 for business plan to seek seed funding	Commence by collaborating with the wine and tourism industry as well as Cessnock City and Singleton Councils to determine the preferred route to deliver by 2028 – develop a business plan, leveraging the Hunter Joint Organisation Global Tourism business case, and seek seed funding to implement the initiative, including consideration of revenue and sponsorship opportunities and user pay fees. Consider regional economic development grant programs.
› PROJECT MANAGEMENT RESOURCE	\$150,000	Part-time resource to deliver program management 1 July 2026 - 1 July 2028
› DEVELOP, PACKAGE AND PROMOTE CONSUMER-LED EXPERIENCES	Within existing budgets	Collaborate with wine and tourism industry

HUNTER VALLEY HERITAGE LISTING

The Hunter Valley is Australia's oldest continuously producing wine region, with vineyard landscapes that demonstrate rare continuity from the early 1800s to today. These landscapes are not just agricultural - they are cultural, historical and environmental assets of national significance. Gaining National Heritage Listing for the Hunter Valley and sub-regions of Pokolbin and Broke-Fordwich will protect this legacy for future generations and position the Hunter Valley for a long-term pathway toward UNESCO World Heritage recognition. UNESCO listing is a future ambition, but national listing is the essential next step.

WORK COMPLETED TO DATE

› FOUNDATIONAL HERITAGE VINEYARD STUDY (2018–2020)

HVWTA, led by Andrew Margan, commissioned a detailed heritage study, funded with NSW Government support, to document the heritage values of the vineyard landscapes—including the oldest vine stock, colonial-era plantings, and the cultural fabric of viticulture in Pokolbin and Broke-Fordwich. The resulting “Hunter Valley Heritage Vineyards Study” provides the evidence base needed for state and national assessment.

› COMPARATIVE CULTURAL LANDSCAPE ANALYSIS – NATIONAL HERITAGE (2024–2025)

In 2024, HVWTA commissioned University of NSW's Professor Elisa Palazzo - an internationally recognised expert in cultural landscapes - to conduct the required comparative analysis against 11 other historically significant Australian regions (e.g., Barossa, McLaren Vale, Rutherglen, Swan Valley).

The recently published study concluded that:

- Hunter Valley is the most authentic, earliest and rarest expression of Australian viticulture.
- The region demonstrates exceptional heritage values under National Heritage criteria (a), (b), (d) and (e), with rarity being the strongest: pre-phylloxera vines, original 19th-century vineyard patterns and living biocultural traditions.
- Hunter Valley and Barossa rank as Australia's two most significant viticultural cultural landscapes, forming a compelling long-term case for a future UNESCO World Heritage nomination.

The final report (August 2025) establishes the evidentiary foundation the Australian Heritage Council requires for nomination.

› WHAT'S REQUIRED NEXT (2025–2026)

To meet the target of lodging the National Heritage nomination by August 2026, the following workstreams must be funded and completed:

PHASE III – FINALISATION FOR NOMINATION

- Prepare and finalise the Statements of Outstanding National Heritage Value for the two GIs
- Complete final comparative mapping, spatial analysis and evidence alignment with NHL criteria
- Develop the Landscape Management Framework required for both nomination and future land- use protections
- Collate industry, community and stakeholder endorsements
- Produce nomination documentation in the format required by the Department of Climate Change, Energy, the Environment and Water (DCCEEW)

PHASE IV – SUBMISSION & ADVOCACY

- Lodgement of the full nomination package (target: August 2026)
- Ongoing advocacy to the Australian Heritage Council and Minister
- Scientific, archival and peer-review support to strengthen the nomination
- Communications collateral for members, government and community

› STATE HERITAGE PATHWAY PLANNING

To prepare for State Heritage nomination, HVWTA will require a Landscape Management Plan - required to accompany any NSW listing. Legislative reform is still underway at the NSW Government level, but foundational work is complete.



HERE'S TO THE GOOD LIFE

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