

Destination Networks

Agritourism Development Blueprint for Regional NSW



Glossary

TERM	DESCRIPTION
<u>Complying development</u>	<p>Complying development is a combined planning and construction approval for straightforward development that can be determined through a fast-track assessment by a council or an accredited certifier. This now includes a range of agritourism uses.</p> <p>Development that is specified in a complying development code that meets the standards specified for that development and that complies with the requirements of a complying development under the State Environmental Planning Policy (Exempt and Complying Development Codes) 2008.</p>
<u>Exempt development</u>	<p>Very low impact development that can be done for certain residential, commercial and industrial properties, under the NSW Planning reforms. This now includes some agritourism uses.</p> <p>As long as the proposed works meet all of the development standards (identified in the State Policy for exempt), that is the development:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • is specified in an exempt development code • meets the standard specified for the development, and • complies with the required for exempt development approval may not be needed.
<u>Standard Instrument</u>	<p>This refers to the Standard Instrument (Local Environmental Plans) Amendment (Agritourism) Order 2022 under the Environmental Planning and Assessment Act 1979.</p> <p>The state government legislation which sets out the standard for preparing local environmental plans (LEPs) includes a Dictionary of standard definitions relating to land uses and other terms relevant to the interpretation and application of LEPs.</p>
State Environmental Planning Policies (SEPP)	<p>State and local planning legislation and policies set the rules that control what development can occur on land in NSW. It forms part of the strategic planning framework for NSW, which aims to create alignment between planning priorities at a state and regional or district level.</p> <p>State environmental planning policies (SEPPs) apply across the state.</p>
Local Environmental Plan (LEP)	<p>Local environmental plans (LEPs) set planning rules for each local government area. They provide a local statutory framework that guides planning decisions for local government areas through zoning and development controls to ensure that development is done appropriately.</p> <p>They are guided by the Standard Instrument and the SEPP.</p>
Development Control Plan (DCP)	<p>A Development Control Plan provides detailed planning and design guidelines to support the planning controls in the LEP. It may contain a range of measures such as planning principles, objectives and controls for buildings, landscaping, drainage and car parking. The then Department of Planning NSW drafted guidelines for councils that can be utilised and updated where relevant for agritourism development.</p>
Zoning	<p>Zoning determines how land can be used (for example, for housing, industry, or recreation). In addition to development standard, agritourism and farmstay accommodation can only be carried out as an exempt or complying development on land zoned in the LEP as:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • RU1 (Primary Production) • RU2 (Rural Landscape) • RU4 (Primary Production Small Lots)

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The Agritourism Blueprints developed by Sparrowly Group for Destination Sydney Surrounds South and Destination Central West, and have been adapted in this document for whole of regional NSW application. The development of agritourism aligns to actions detailed the Destination Management Plans of each Destination Network and supports objectives outlined in various State and National strategies, including but not limited to, the NSW Visitor Economy Strategy 2035 and THRIVE 2030.

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Version Control

- 1.0 - original document was prepared in September 2023
- 2.0 - document was updated in October 2024 and January 2025
- 3.0 - document was updated and amended in some places to be available online via the Destination Networks in November 2025

Front cover – The Farm, Byron Bay; Shields Orchard, Bilpin; The Zin House, Mudgee. Credit: Destination NSW.

Back page – Yarran Wines, Yenda. Credit: Destination NSW.

Executive Summary

Agritourism in Australia is an increasingly popular visitor experience, allowing visitors to engage with farmers and their produce throughout the agribusiness value chain. 92% of agritourism experiences take place in regional locations, attracting visitors to rural and regional Australia. For farmers, diversifying into agritourism not only maximises economic returns from their land but also supports long-term viability and sustainability. It can also create job opportunities for the next generation, encouraging them to return or stay on the farm and in their communities.

Agritourism is a global trend driven by visitors seeking educational, interactive and sustainable experiences related to agriculture. Culinary adventures are a major drawcard, with visitors desiring authentic food and drink experiences that showcase regional products and flavours.

Preserving farmland is essential for food production, food security, and maintaining rural landscapes in regional towns. Agritourism supports this. Additionally, it presents an opportunity for destinations to showcase their unique agricultural offerings, attracting both domestic and international visitors year-round.

However, there are challenges to address, including policy and planning frameworks, operating restrictions, business management (including insurance and tax), biosecurity risks, labour shortages, and climate change impacts. Despite these challenges, there is work being undertaken to unlock the full potential of agritourism in Australia.

Agritourism Development in NSW

NSW is the first state in Australia to undertake a review to formalise planning pathways. The then NSW Department of Planning and Environment introduced simplified planning regulations in December 2022 designed to make it easier for farmers in NSW to use their land for tourism activities. These pathways allow farmers to use exempt and complying development processes, which are quicker, cheaper and simpler than making development applications to a local council.

The Destination Networks and industry stakeholders played an integral role in instigating this review and continue to actively advocate to ensure that these regulations are current in response to the changing environment of both the visitor economy and agriculture sectors.

Destination NSW identifies through the Visitor Economy Strategy 2035 that agritourism is an experience strength for NSW. To support this, Destination NSW has two staff members as part of the product development team that are focused on agritourism and culinary experiences. Destination NSW works in partnership with the Destination Networks to grow agritourism across the state.



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Pathways

Developing agritourism requires a holistic approach, recognising its symbiotic relationship with agriculture, tourism, and regional communities. It should be viewed as part of the overall destination story, with a focus on offering unique and complementary experiences. Farmers need time, education, and support to diversify into agritourism, and there is no one-size-fits-all approach due to the unique nature of each farm. Stakeholders must have clear roles and responsibilities, and a well-defined enablement framework which will assist in facilitating successful agritourism development while considering broader agriculture as the foundation industry for farmers.

The pathways for maximising agritourism opportunities consist of five key areas aimed at sustainable growth of the sector and aligned with various state and regional plans. The first area involves building relationships and rapport within the agriculture ecosystem, recognising the long-term nature of agritourism development and the importance of nurturing trust and networks between stakeholders.

The second area focuses on deepening the understanding of agribusiness across the region to enable a more integrated approach to agritourism. This involves consolidating farmland mapping data to identify agritourism clusters and further exploring the barriers to agritourism diversification. A shared vision is sought to support farmers in exploring agritourism opportunities while addressing various challenges.

The third area emphasises advocacy and education to activate the network of enablers. This entails educating councils, industry, and communities about agritourism, understanding its benefits and impacts, and encouraging continued collaboration and advocacy.

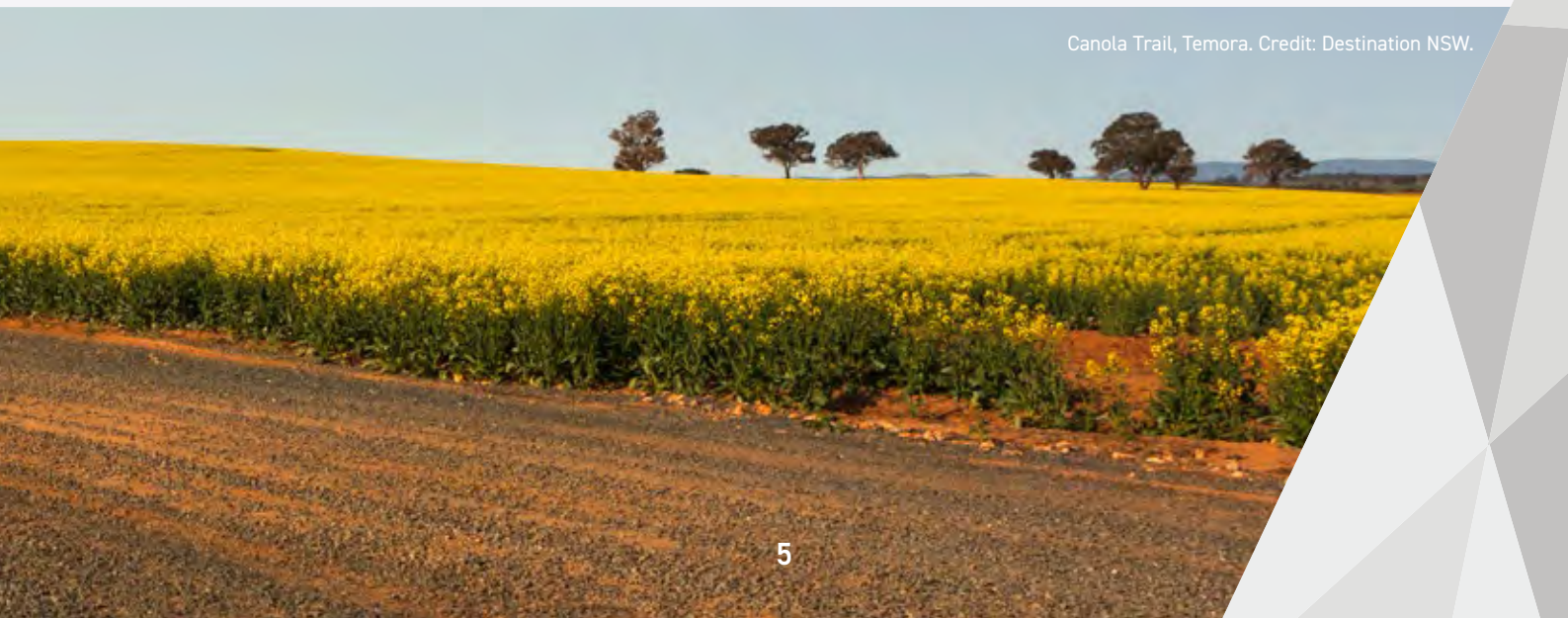
The fourth area is dedicated to developing unique products, experiences, and growing industry capability. Additionally, the industry development framework provides pathways for different types of operators, including on-farm experiences, existing operators, new and potential operators, as well as broader gastronomic and other visitor economy experiences.

The fifth area focuses on driving demand through collective storytelling and marketing efforts. This allows consistent messaging, regional trail development, and collaboration with Destination NSW to further incorporate agritourism products into their activities.

Finally, the Blueprint includes a stakeholder matrix, highlighting key stakeholders and their levels of interest and influence, as well as an industry development framework to build capability and support both traditional and broader agritourism experience development.

This Blueprint will enable the Destination Networks, key stakeholders and the current agriculture sector to work towards common outcomes of sustainable and vibrant agricultural and visitor economy sectors.

Canola Trail, Temora. Credit: Destination NSW.



Contextual Understanding

The following provides an overview of the current state of agritourism from a national perspective. It brings together a deep literature review of the definitions and context in relation to planning and regulations. It was developed through a desktop literature review, social listening, consultation with local and state government industry and advocacy bodies.

Defining Agritourism

In its simplest form, agritourism is the combination of agriculture and tourism. It provides the opportunity for visitors to be exposed to or engage in agricultural activities, learn about farming practices, and experience rural life. It has an important role in creating a direct connection between primary producers and end consumers.

Australian Regional Tourism defines agritourism as:

'A type of experiential travel which connects people to product or produce, delivered on farming land through a direct "on farm" experience'.¹

Distinct from other commercial or tourism uses, agritourism has an essential connection with the agricultural use of the land. It creates diversified and additional revenue streams for producers, increasing farm income and in turn employment and business sustainability. It is important to understand that farming must come first with agritourism income secondary. The agricultural use may be seasonal however, the primary use of the land must remain a commercial farm on which agriculture is undertaken – be it aquaculture, viticulture, sheep, poultry, pig, beef cattle, dairy or other livestock farming or growing fruit, vegetables or other crops.

Farms can vary in size, ranging from small family-owned operations to large commercial enterprises. As such the term 'hobby farm' is misleading and should not be used as it has different meaning for farmers of different scales.

¹ Australian Regional Tourism 2022, *Agritourism 2030 - National Agritourism Strategy Framework*

The range of produce that can be showcased through agritourism is diverse but limited only to what can be produced on the specific farm hosting the agritourism experience.

Business Type and Zoning

Most importantly, these agritourism experiences are to be delivered **on** a working farm, where commercial agriculture is the **primary** use of the land, and includes a level of engagement with farmers, produce or both.

To meet the criteria of an agritourism business, the **main use of the land is the production of agricultural goods for commercial purposes**. In NSW this is defined by in one of two ways²:

- The business is a primary production business as defined under the Income Tax Assessment Act 1997 (Cth), or
- The land has been categorised as **'farmland'** by the council under the Local Government Act 1993.

Additionally, the land must be zoned to allow for the development of agritourism experiences. In NSW, under the new planning reforms introduced in December 2022, exempt and complying agritourism experiences can generally only be carried out on land zoned in the relevant council's Local Environmental Plan (LEP) as:

- RU1 (Primary Production)
- RU2 (Rural Landscape)
- RU4 (Primary Production Small Lots).

Agritourism may be permissible within other zonings subject to the local LEP and as per each individual business's development application (DA).

² NSW Government 2022, Standard Instrument (Local Environmental Plans) Amendment (Agritourism) Order 2022

Hillside Harvest, Orange. Credit: Destination NSW.

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Agritourism Experience Types

The types of on-farm agritourism experiences that can be delivered are grouped into three broad categories as defined by the then NSW Department of Planning in the Standard Instrument.³

Farm gate experiences

This is where visitors interact with produce from the farm and allows visitors to purchase produce grown on the farm (this can be supplemented with produce from other local farms in the area). These experiences are generally delivered in a building or structure (premise) on the farm.

Types of farm gate experiences include:

- direct shop front outlets
- farm gate sales from a roadside stall
- produce tastings (including cellar doors)
- cooking classes
- pick your own
- cafes and restaurants
- workshops

Farm experiences

This is where visitors can experience life on a farm through small scale and low impact tourist and recreational activities and events.

Types of farm experiences include:

- farm tours
- education and school visits
- horse riding
- functions (including weddings)
- conferences and business events
- retreats
- farm field days

Farm stay accommodation

Visitors can stay on-farm which provides an opportunity to understand the land in greater depth than can be offered by day visits. Often the accommodation is coupled with activities within the property.

Types of farm stay accommodation include:

- repurposed farm buildings
- other permanent accommodation structures
- moveable dwellings, including tiny houses, tents and caravans

³ NSW Department of Planning 2022, *Agritourism*

The Giving Farm, Central Coast. Credit: Destination NSW.



Visitor Definition

It is important to note that consumer perceptions of agritourism vary. The general understanding revolves around the idea of combining tourism with agricultural activities and embracing the rural environment. Consumers may associate agritourism with a diverse range of experiences, both on farm and off-farm, refer to Table 1. They do not necessarily understand the nuances of planning and land use that by definition require agritourism experiences to be delivered on a commercial farm and provide a level of interaction with the people, place or produce. Rather they are interested in farm-to-table and other dining experiences, workshops, classes, accommodation and wellness experiences that have a rural connection.

PLANNING DEFINITION	VISITOR PERCEPTION
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Commercial working farm • On-farm activity 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • On rural land • On-farm and off-farm activity • Accommodation on rural land • Local produce

Table 1 - NSW Planning and Australian Regional Tourism definition for agritourism against what the visitor perceives.

There is an opportunity to embed agritourism experiences as part of an overall travel experience.⁴ Experiences with broad appeal and hero destinations and events can be leveraged to create trails and itineraries that incorporate agritourism offerings, planting the idea of agritourism in the minds of visitors who may not have considered it before. Conversely, itineraries which combine a range of complementary experiences, such as ecotourism and indigenous experiences, may encourage true agritourism visitors to explore further in regional areas and stay longer.

From a marketing perspective consideration should be given to the positioning of agritourism to ensure that terminology resonates with the end user - the *visitor*.

The Agritourism Ecosystem

While a true agritourism experience is delivered on a working farm, there are a range of other products and experiences that can showcase agricultural offerings in a destination. These include off-farm experiences like farmers markets, regional food events, providers and regional food stores and restaurants featuring local produce. It can also include events such as wedding or farm-to-fork dining experiences on rural properties and farmland that is no longer operated commercially.

These fall under the broader definition of **gastronomic tourism**, which also includes agritourism. As they don't occur on-farm or provide direct interaction with the farmer, they are not by definition an agritourism experience. They are, however, an important part of the overall agritourism ecosystem. These are outlined in Figure 1.

⁴ Tourism Western Australia 2021, *Agritourism Market Segmentation Key Findings - November 2021*

Catch A Crab, West Tweed Heads. Credit: Destination NSW.



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The Agritourism Ecosystem (continued)

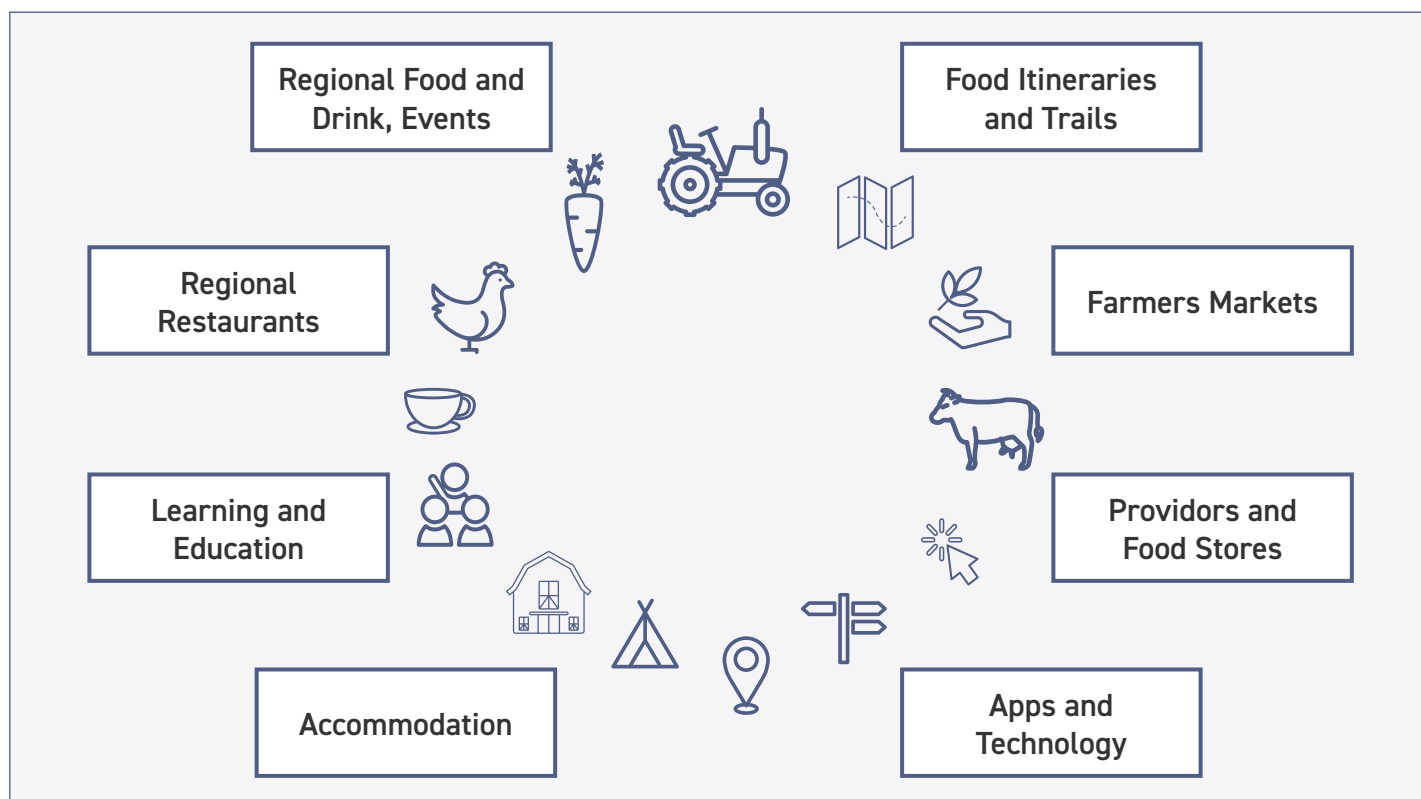
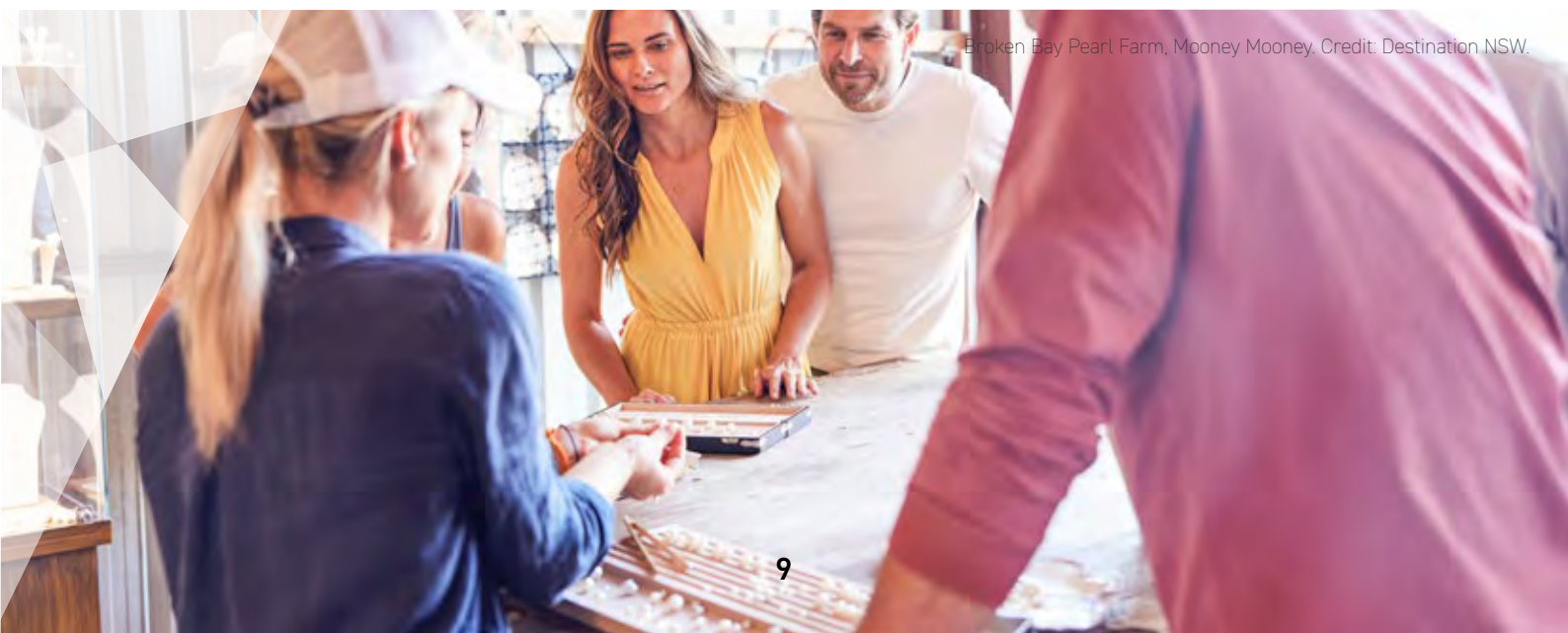


Figure 1 - Agritourism ecosystem experiences. Source - Australian Regional Tourism, *Agritourism 2030 - National Agritourism Strategy Framework*.

These experiences add depth to the overall destination experience and create a supporting ecosystem for farmers, providing alternate ways for visitors to access and consume local produce. As well as indirect means for farmers to enter into tourism and diversify their income streams.

Businesses and products that form part of the agritourism ecosystem are detailed in Table 2, over the page.



Broken Bay Pearl Farm, Mooney Mooney. Credit: Destination NSW.

The Agritourism Ecosystem (continued)

SUPPORTING EXPERIENCE	DEFINITION
Farmers Markets	Where local farmers, growers, and producers sell their fresh, locally sourced agricultural products directly to consumers providing an opportunity for people to connect with local food producers and purchase high-quality, seasonal produce, meats, dairy products, baked goods, and other artisanal items.
Providores and Regional Food Stores	Retailers that showcase and sell locally produced food and beverage products. Prioritising supporting local farmers, artisans and food producers, they offer a selection of regional specialities such as ingredients, condiments and spices and promote the local food culture.
Food and Drink Events	Gatherings or festivals that celebrate and showcase the culinary and beverage offerings of a specific geographic area. They bring together local farmers, chefs, brewers, winemakers, and other producers, providing an opportunity for people to immerse themselves in the flavours of the region.
Restaurants	Restaurants featuring local produce prioritise sourcing ingredients from nearby farms and suppliers. By incorporating seasonal, locally grown produce into their menus, these restaurants offer a culinary experience that showcases the flavours and quality of the region while promoting sustainability and a connection to the local food system.
Itineraries and Touring Trails	Curated routes that guide visitors through a series of experiences in a specific region or destination highlighting restaurants, food markets, specialty shops, and local food producers and experiences.
Accommodation	Either on-farm with no engagement or off-farm showcasing rural settings. Visitors can experience a slice of rural life without the immersion or engagement of a traditional farm stay.
Learning and Education Opportunities	Workshops, classes, museums and other education programs with a focus on food or food production, which are delivered both on and off-farm. These could include foraging, cooking classes or indigenous cultural experiences with a bush tucker focus. Additional opportunities exist to activate agricultural assets including saleyards for tours and behind the scenes experiences, as well as equine experiences (horse riding or agistment).
Apps and Technology	Apps and technologies contribute to enhancing the overall agritourism experience, making it more accessible, informative, and interactive for visitors while supporting the growth and sustainability of agritourism businesses. For example purpose built apps, digital maps and navigation, AR and VR technologies and social media.

Table 2 - Off-farm agritourism ecosystem experiences and offerings.

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The Agritourism Ecosystem (continued)

In addition to these broader supporting experiences, there are three key enablers for a thriving agritourism ecosystem.

Host communities

Like all tourism offerings, agritourism needs the support of local host communities. Local communities provide the social licence for both tourism and agritourism to operate. Agritourism, if done well, can create new opportunities for regional areas which support not only farmers but the community as a whole. In order for agritourism to thrive in a destination, it is important to work with the community to help them to understand the benefits, identify impacts and build trust, support and advocacy over time.

Government

Federal, state and local governments all have a role to play in the agritourism ecosystem. Policy, land-use planning and development approvals all impact directly on the location, types and scale of both on-farm and off-farm experience offerings. Additionally, business licensing, operating requirements and other legislation impacts the viability of both agriculture and agritourism businesses.

Critical to the success of agritourism are local governments that advocate for agritourism developments that are aligned with the interests of the community.

Government-led business development, education, funding and marketing programs can help to drive success in the sector.

Supply chain

In order for agritourism to be successful the infrastructure needs to be in place for both the agricultural and the tourism sides of the business. Successful agribusinesses of all sizes require efficient supply chain and logistics networks which enable them to get their product to market. This can include transport infrastructure (such as road and rail networks), processing facilities such as abattoirs (mobile and permanent) and distribution networks. Having efficient and effective supply chains in place for primary production allows farmers to focus on diversifying into agritourism.

Jim Wilds Oysters, Greenwell Point. Credit: Destination NSW.

Agritourism in Australia

Agritourism in Australia has gained popularity in recent years, offering experiences that allow them to engage with farmers and their produce at various stages of the agribusiness value chain. With 92% of agritourism experiences delivered in regional areas, it plays a significant role in attracting visitors to rural and regional Australia.⁵

Diversifying into agritourism and spreading their business offering allows farmers to maximise the economic return from their land and supports viability and future sustainability. For generational farmers, it can also create jobs and diversified careers for the next generation, giving them a reason to stay on the farm and in the community.

Work is underway and will continue, to capture the value of agritourism in NSW and more widely across Australia. In October 2025, research data provided by Tourism Research Australia in partnership with Tourism Australia was released and shows the opportunity for the nation's visitor economy as agritourism grows in popularity. To date, there is no specific data on actual spend on agritourism activities, data provided includes overall spend of visitors who engaged in some type of agritourism activity during their trip or stay.

The research does indicate strong engagement with agritourism, with NSW being one of two top destination states, accounting for 1 in 3 trips involving agritourism. The agritourism related activities captured in the research includes:

- farm visits,
- visits to farm gates,
- visits to wineries, breweries or distilleries,
- Aboriginal food experiences, and
- visits to food markets.

The research indicated that total spend on trips in Australia involving agritourism grew by 5% in 2024 from the previous year. International spend increased 22% on trips including agritourism (overall growth of this market was just 19%). Domestic day trip spend when engaging in agritourism activities increased 18% (ahead of overall trip spend which fell by 7% compared with 2023). Domestic overnight spend on trips with agritourism decreased by 2% in 2024⁶.

The results also indicated that travellers who engaged in agritourism engaged in a higher number of trip activities compared with the average traveller. That is, these visitors were likely to particularly eat out, sightsee, spend time in nature and go shopping, more than the average traveller. This aligns with the higher-than-average trip spend of those participating in agritourism activities during their trip⁷.

Table 3 details the profile of typical agritourism travellers in both the international and domestic markets based on 2024 data.

⁶ Tourism Research Australia 2025, *Agritourism in Australia – Measuring and evaluating agritourism in Australia*
⁷ Ibid

Measure	INTERNATIONAL	DOMESTIC
Median age	45-54 (same)	35-44 (same)
Gender	Female (same)	Female (51% vs 46%)
Travel party	Travelling alone (49% vs 54%)	Adult couple (35% vs 24%)
Average spend per trip	\$3,894 (vs \$2,044)	\$863 (vs \$462)
Purpose of travel	Holiday (56% vs 49%)	Holiday (66% vs 52%)
From (region)	UK (12% vs 8%) China (10% vs 9%) USA (10% vs 9%)	Melbourne (20% vs 16%) Sydney (14% vs 15%) Regional NSW (14% vs 15%)

Table 3 - International and domestic profiles for agritourism travellers. Source – Tourism Research Australia 2025, *Agritourism in Australia – Measuring and evaluating agritourism in Australia*.

⁵ Australian Regional Tourism 2022, *Agritourism 2030 - National Agritourism Strategy Framework*

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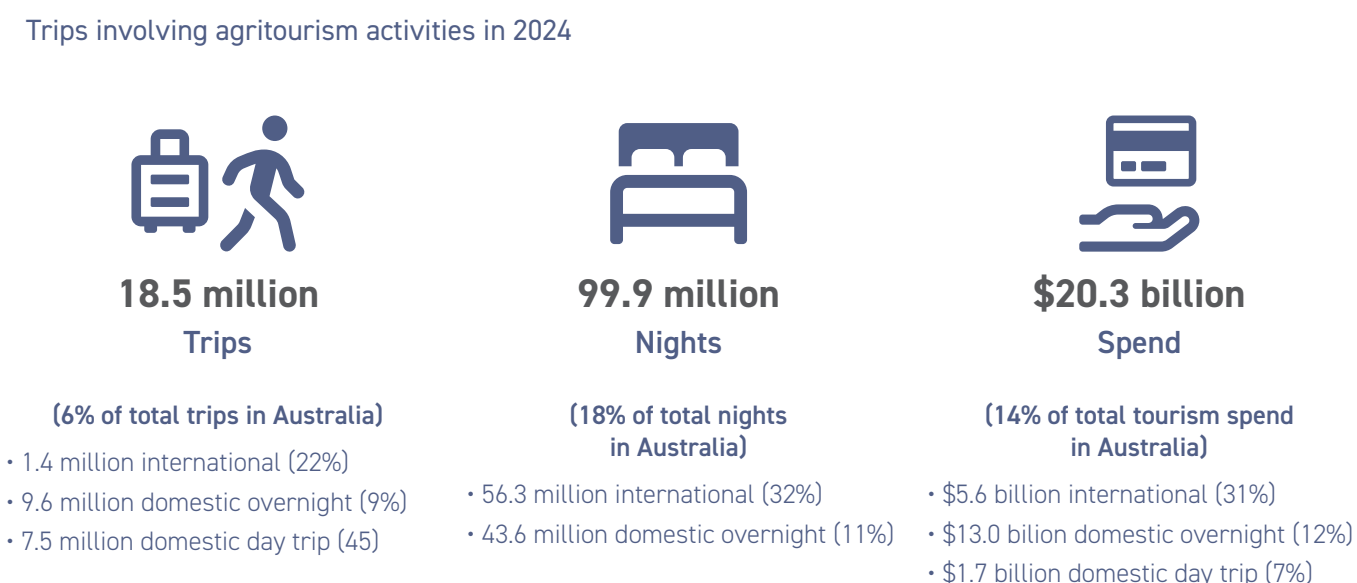
The Australian agritourism landscape

There are several regions which stand out as agritourism destinations all with various agricultural landscapes and endowments. Whilst many regions promote themselves as being the food bowls of Australia, regions have made their own mark earning their reputation as destinations that are merging agriculture and tourism together.

Tasmania's pristine landscapes, commitment to sustainability and fertile cool-climate agricultural lands offer opportunities for farm stays and tasting tours and showcase the state's high-quality produce. Queensland's tropical climate supports diverse agricultural practices, with attractions like banana plantations, sugarcane farms, and tropical fruit orchards inviting visitors to explore the region's unique produce. In particular the Scenic Rim is the state's highest producing agritourism region, delivering around \$108 million to the regional economy (March 2021) and they have developed an Agribusiness and Agritourism 10-Year Roadmap to continue to focus and grow this segment.⁸

Tourism Australia's future of demand research identifies agritourism, specifically Aquaculture and Farm Experiences, in the immersive experience cluster, with Farm Experiences the most popular activity.⁹

The diversity of experiences on offer attract both domestic and international visitors, day trips and overnight stays. Figure 2 outlines the summary of trips involving agritourism activities in 2024 as provided by Tourism Research Australia, based on National Visitor Survey (NVS) and International Visitor Survey (IVS) data.



Brackets indicate share of agritourism to total metrics for tourism in Australia in 2024.

Figure 2 - Trips involving agritourism activities in 2024. Source – Tourism Research Australia 2025, *Agritourism in Australia – Measuring and evaluating agritourism in Australia*.

⁸ Scenic Rim Regional Council, *Agribusiness and Agritourism*

⁹ Tourism Australia 2022, *Future of Global Demand Public Report*

Agritourism in NSW

In NSW, there are a number of regions which are renowned for various agricultural products and visitor experiences. Viticulture and cellar door experiences is arguably the beginning of agritourism in Australia. The learnings from viticulture encouraged other destinations to incorporate into broader and expanded agritourism experiences (including refining cellar door tastings, cooking classes, immersive meet the maker opportunities and farmgate premises experiences). In particular the Hunter Valley, renowned for being one of NSW's oldest wine regions, attracts both domestic and international visitors to its vineyards and wine tasting experiences.

NSW is the second most popular wine destination in Australia for international visitors. In 2024, key regions visited were the Hunter Valley (65%), Canberra District (Murrumbateman, Yass) and the Shoalhaven Coast (Ulladulla, Nowra, Gerringong and Shoalhaven Heads), exact figures for the latter two regions were not publishable.

For domestic visitors, NSW was the number one state destination for number of visitors, nights and expenditure. The top tourism regions stayed were the Hunter (32%), Central NSW (22%) and South Coast (16%). For this market, winery activities included wine tasting (63%), ate at winery cafe/restaurant (58%), purchased wine to take home (54%) and purchased food at the wineries (34%).¹⁰

Regional NSW attracted over half (65%) of domestic food tourism travellers to NSW in 2024, with Sydney attracting the remaining visitors (36%). Of all domestic visitors to NSW fine dining restaurants were the top food experience (62%), followed by food markets (36%) and food festivals (5%). Of regional destinations visited, the highest ranked destinations were the North Coast (18%) and the South Coast (14%).¹¹

Other agricultural regions growing in agritourism appeal in NSW include the Riverina Murray region which has large land holdings dominated by dry land grazing and commodity cereal-based cropping. There has been an emergence of agritourism clusters throughout the region including in Wagga Wagga, Leeton, Griffith, and Mildura. Key experiences include vineyards with cellar doors, farm tours, farm stays, and farm gate premises. In the NSW North Coast, Manning Valley's farming activities include beef cattle, small scale dairying, vineyards, oysters, macadamia nuts and a number of farmers markets for visitors.

¹⁰ Destination NSW 2025, *Wine Tourism in NSW - YE December 2024*.

¹¹ Destination NSW 2025, *Food Tourism in NSW - YE December 2024*.

Kimo Estate, Nangus. Credit: Destination NSW.



Agribusiness in Australia

In Australia, the farming community is a tightly-knit and resilient network that plays a crucial role in the country's economy and food production. Farmers in Australia connect through various channels, including informal information sharing with one another, local farming associations, industry events, agricultural shows, and online forums. These connections foster a sense of camaraderie and facilitate the exchange of knowledge, best practices, and information about market trends and challenges. Additionally, agricultural cooperatives, produce associations (for example, beef or dairy collective associations) and support organisations provide a platform for farmers to collaborate, share resources, and collectively address issues like droughts, pests, and market fluctuations. The farmer community in Australia is known for its strong spirit of mutual support, with experienced farmers often mentoring newcomers and sharing their expertise.

The farmer community in Australia is closely connected through generational farming, where families pass down knowledge and traditions, contributing to a sense of continuity and heritage in the sector. Many farming families have been involved for generations, forming close networks built on trust and support. Farmers are planning for the future, with multi-generational engagement occurring on farms across the country. As the next generation enters farming businesses, often after having a period away building a career off-farm, they bring with them diverse skills, business knowledge and different perspectives. This new generation sees opportunities for diversification to increase the viability of the family farming business and often bring a strong sense of entrepreneurship.

However, there is a growing number of farm newcomers who purchase property and move into regional areas with somewhat little farming knowledge or backgrounds. Whilst there may be some challenges getting started, generally the farming community are open to collaborating with new farmers who show respect for their heritage and share a commitment to sustainable agriculture and contributing to growing Australia's food systems.

Non-farmers can best work with farmers by actively listening to their perspectives, understanding the challenges they face, and offering support or collaboration in areas where they can add value, such as sustainable practices, technology adoption, business operations (including succession planning), diversification or marketing assistance.

Agricultural Land

Preserving farmland is not only important for our food production and food security, but also to regional communities in maintaining their rural landscapes. Maintaining rural land and striking a balance between commercial farmland and residential development is a priority in many regional towns. Where there are conflicting priorities for land use, enabling farmers to run a diverse range of viable business, including agritourism, may act as an incentive to continue their business, compared to in previous decades where they have felt no choice but to sell to developers.

Farm ownerships and structures are changing, impacting farm sizes. Succession planning on intergenerational farms is resulting in large farms being split into a number of smaller lots to allow for division of the asset across the family. Children returning to the farms may be more predisposed to diversifying income streams, regenerative farming methods and agritourism development. Conversely, large agricultural corporations are acquiring considerable holdings of farmland across some regions. These corporations have no interest in utilising the land for any purpose other than farming with land essentially becoming vacant lots out of season. This is negatively impacting communities, especially with low housing stock and restricts potential opportunities for agritourism development.

In some areas, lot sizes are becoming smaller and 'tree changers' are purchasing farms for a lifestyle change, often with a view to regenerate the land. This is leading to a shift in farming practices. Farming on a smaller scale means that diversification is required for the lifestyle to be viable and agritourism can be complementary to regenerative farming practices. Beyond economics it can also provide social benefits, creating new contacts and networks. Done well, it can play an important role in transforming both agricultural businesses and visitor economies.

Agricultural production in a region is linked to the geographic and climatic conditions of a destination. As such agritourism presents an opportunity for destinations to differentiate their offerings, working with farmers and primary producers to showcase what is unique and distinctive to their region. Experiences can be linked to the seasonality of crops and produce, providing reasons for repeat visitation throughout the year.

National Agricultural Challenges

While there is much opportunity for agritourism growth, there are a number of challenges at a national level that continue to be addressed as outlined in Figure 3.



Figure 3 - Challenges in agritourism across Australia.

Policy and planning frameworks across the country can restrict agritourism development with timeframes and cost for approvals making the pathway unviable. Additional operating restrictions such as limits on number of visitors limits the ability to scale to the size required to become financially viable.

Many primary production businesses have restrictions on the ability to sell directly to the public, for example dairy farmers contracts may restrict them from using their own milk on-site, oyster farmers under their leasing arrangements may not be able to sell direct to the public. There are also biosecurity risks to be considered.

Regional challenges such as labour shortages and infrastructure quality, including roads and signage, is crucial. Long-term risks posed by climate change, extreme weather events, and natural disasters like droughts, bushfires, and cyclones also need to be considered as they can impact both the demand and supply of agritourism experiences.

Work is being done to address some of these issues and challenges. As destinations work to pursue agritourism development, it is important for it to be considered in the context of these challenges.

Quality business advice is essential to success in agritourism to ensure diversification is right for individual farms and appropriate business structures are in place. Important factors to consider and seek tailored advice on include taxation such as land tax, succession planning and insurance. Advice must be sought from an experienced accountant, solicitor and insurance broker. Insights on the complexity of these issues are available in [this resource from Tilma Group](#).

A National Perspective

Australian Regional Tourism

Australian Regional Tourism (ART) has long recognised the importance of agritourism as a critical opportunity for the agriculture and tourism industries in Australia. ART aims to support the future growth of the sector through a focus on farm diversification, community capacity building, and the development of high-quality agritourism experiences.

In 2022, in partnership with the National Farmers Federations, Airbnb, Tourism Australia and the State and Territory tourism organisations, ART released the National Agritourism Strategy Framework. Through leadership and collaboration, the Framework aims to 'support a thriving, diverse agritourism sector that evolves sustainably, responsibly, is embraced by communities and loved by visitors'.

It makes a series of recommendations to support the growth of the sector to 2030, which are underpinned by six strategic priorities, as shown in Table 4, focused on making it easier for farmers to diversify into tourism.¹²

STRATEGIC PRIORITIES
1. Sustainable and inclusive farm diversification Engaging new and varied farmers to diversify, making it easier to build sustainable, profitable businesses and increasing Indigenous engagement in the sector.
2. Community capability and capacity building with a focus on regional employment Supports skills and jobs development for farm families and the broader community. It acknowledges the increased resourcing required to diversify and the change of skills needed to expand from farming into consumer facing tourism.
3. Develop new, high quality, distinctly Australian agritourism experiences Beyond farmers diversifying into tourism, experience development and improvement is required to deliver to our vision of attracting higher yielding visitors to regional areas.
4. Promote the sector responsibly, with an alignment to food and drink Agritourism leans heavily into Australia's reputation for food and drink, both in agriculture and hospitality. Generating demand with a focus on quality not quantity, sharing the story of people, place craft and produce.
5. Encourage genuine collaboration and enduring partnerships Leverages the experiences of others to support broader thinking, knowledge sharing and strengthen the sector's timeliness to market.
6. Provide leadership to support growth Support leadership of the sector as it evolves and matures, bringing the stakeholders on the growth journey.

Table 4 - Australian Regional Tourism National Agritourism Strategy Framework Strategic Priorities.

The Strategy Framework is supported by two practical toolkits with resources for both farmers and local councils:

- [Enabling Agritourism – A Guide for Farmers Planning to Diversify.](#)
- [Enabling Agritourism – Paving the Way for Successful Development Applications.](#)

With a plan laid out and resources developed, the next steps for the ART Strategy is to take the recommendations to Federal Tourism and Agriculture Ministers to seek support, including funding to implement initiatives.

¹² Australian Regional Tourism 2022, *Agritourism 2030 - National Agritourism Strategy Framework*

Agritourism Branding

Australia's agritourism branding and its competitive advantage stem from its reputation as a leading producer and exporter of agricultural products. The alignment of export and source markets enhances exposure to Australian world-class food and drink exports and tourism marketing messaging, creating opportunities for cross-promotion. Australia's isolation has fostered innovation in agriculture, resilient communities, and unique environments, with biosecurity measures protecting exceptional flora and fauna.

Australia's agritourism sector capitalises on its clean, green, and safe produce which has established a strong foundation for agritourism branding.

The alignment of export markets for agriculture with inbound tourism source markets provides an advantage, as customers in these markets are already exposed to Australian food and drink exports and tourism marketing messaging. In 2022 under the umbrella Brand Australia, Austrade delivered an agribusiness campaign 'Shine with Australia' for suppliers to shine in their best light promoting Australia as a buyer's first choice for food and wine producers. At the heart of the campaign were inspirational stories from Australian producers in various sectors, from seafood to citrus, dairy to beef.

Changing climatic conditions and evolving farming practices, including the rise of small farmers pursuing a connected and wholesome lifestyle, cater to the preferences of discerning global visitors seeking sustainable experiences. The prominence of food provenance and successful campaigns such as Tourism Australia's Restaurant Australia contribute to increased spend in the agritourism sector.

The ART National Agritourism Strategy Framework positions Australian agritourism as 'Distinctive, Progressive, Collaborative, Respectful and Proud'.¹³ There is strong alignment for responsible growth with sustainability of communities and farmers at the heart of agritourism diversification. The respect for Country, craft, traditions, seasonality, quality and above all time underpins growth of a world class Australian agritourism sector that aligns our global reputations for excellence in both agriculture and tourism.

In terms of state branding, while no state has an agritourism specific brand, [Brand Tasmania](#) is an example of how a broader statewide place-brand can be used as more than a logo or tagline but a way to connect people, place and products. Agribusiness is a key sector under the brand with Tasmanian Stories driving the brand, for example [Tasman Salt](#), adding to the collective narrative of the overarching Tasmanian story. South Australia is following a similar branding approach and is currently in development.

From a NSW perspective, the 'Feel New' Destination NSW branding allows for cities and regions to leverage a unified brand identity. The great local food, wine and produce message through the 'Connection' feeling aligns across regional positioning and key strengths in most Destination Networks.¹⁴ In NSW, the seasonality of produce and events is a strong asset in the marketplace to leverage as part of broader demand-driving activities.

Many regions across Australia claim the title of the food bowl in their destination marketing which, while correct, it is important to position agriculture and agritourism as part of the broader destination narrative. Agritourism strengthens and differentiates the value proposition for visitors, showcasing the diversity in appeal and highlighting the agricultural and value add production mix.

This has been done well in a number of regions across the country leveraging off hero and established agriculture and value-add brands. Bundaberg's rich sugar cane industry and production of Bundaberg Rum are strong brands which has provided the foundation for Bundaberg as a destination to leverage off and build the broader agriculture and agritourism narrative. Similarly, the strength of the dairy industry in the South Coast with brands such as Bodalla Milk, Tilba Milk and Bega Cheese have been foundational draw cards to drive the destination for agritourism and beyond. Equally viticulture and wine production has been done well across many parts of Australia and internationally in driving the destination brand. For example, Penfolds in the Barossa Valley and Champagne as a product from the Champagne region in France. For some regions, agritourism and more broadly gastronomy tourism, are their primary strength in which to brand the region.

¹³ Australian Regional Tourism 2022, *Agritourism 2030 - National Agritourism Strategy Framework*

¹⁴ Destination NSW, *'Feel NSW' Master Brand Guidelines*

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Agritourism Trends

Current and Future Trends

Agritourism is a global trend driven by visitors seeking educational, interactive, and sustainable experiences that provide a deeper understanding of agriculture. This growing interest is reflected in the global market size, which was valued at \$42,460.3 million in 2019 and is projected to reach \$62,982.6 million by 2027.¹⁵

Visitors are drawn to agritourism for culinary adventures, desiring to sample authentic cuisines, ingredients, and drinks while exploring new flavours and textures. They are also interested in the stories behind the food, encompassing the people, processes, and places involved in its production. Consumers are increasingly demanding authentic regional food products and experiences that are not necessarily gourmet but are unique and memorable.

Tourism Australia's Future of Demand research identifies that 'farm experiences and tasting trails are niche passion points that can influence travel' with the potential to appeal to specific visitor segments:

- **Exploration Travellers** (accounting for 17% of visitors) - they are motivated to discover new destinations, learn about the world, and immerse themselves in different cultures or ways of life.
- **Passion/Hobbies Travellers** (accounting for 14% of visitors) - who want to indulge in a passion while giving back.

The research also identifies two experience clusters which encompass agritourism and broader gastronomic tourism offerings:

- **Sensory** - focuses on *enjoyment* via good food and drink, sightseeing and culture. Examples include tasting trails, beer wine and liquor tastings, meet the maker experiences, fishing and hunting, foraging and gathering, winery stays and dining showcasing local produce and cuisine and food festivals.
- **Immersive** - characterised by *learning, education and personal development*. Examples include on-farm experiences and farm stays, learning new skills such as cooking, wine or cheese making or eco-experiences such as forest bathing.

The key attractions for visitors are appealing 'lifestyle draw cards' which include food and beverage production and tasting opportunities, beautiful environmental surroundings, rural culture and farm-based recreational activities.

¹⁵ Allied Market Research, *Agritourism Market by Activity (On-Farm Sales, Outdoor Recreation, Agritainment, Educational Tourism, Accommodations, and Others), Sales Channel (Travel Agents and Direct): Global Opportunity Analysis and Industry Forecast 2021-2027*

Tropical Fruit World, Duranbah. Credit: Destination NSW.



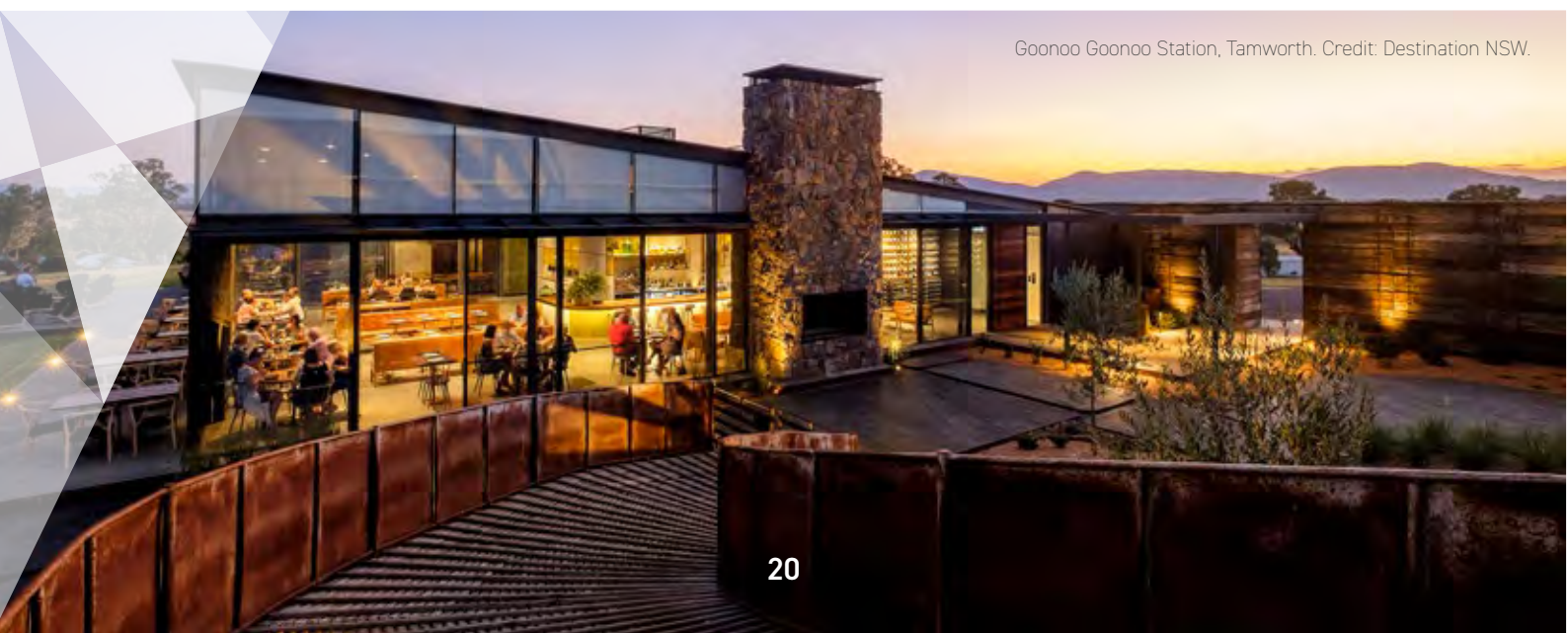
Current and Future Trends (continued)

Types of agritourism experiences that are growing in popularity globally are outlined in Table 5. There are a number of similarities here with the agritourism ecosystem experiences, confirming visitors seeing agritourism experiences as showcasing local produce on rural land, which doesn't specify for on-farm or off-farm activities.

EXPERIENCE	DEFINITION
Farm-to-Table Experiences	Where visitors can participate in activities such as harvesting fresh produce, cooking with local ingredients, and enjoying meals made from farm-fresh produce.
Educational Experiences	Farm owners are expanding their offerings to include workshops, demonstrations, and hands-on activities related to sustainable farming practices, animal husbandry, organic gardening, fermenting and more. This trend is likely to continue as people seek authentic and educational experiences.
Agritainment	To attract a wider audience, many agritourism destinations are incorporating entertainment aspects into their offerings. This can include activities like corn mazes, hayrides, petting zoos, pumpkin patches, and live music events. The integration of entertainment elements enhances the overall visitor experience and encourages families and groups to spend more time on the farm.
Farm Stays and Groups	These experiences allow visitors to immerse themselves in the rural lifestyle by staying overnight on a farm. It provides an opportunity to learn about farming practices, participate in daily farm activities, and enjoy the tranquillity of rural surroundings. Farm stays and camps can range from basic accommodations to more luxurious options, depending on the target audience.
Agri-wellness	As people seek to connect with nature and find ways to improve their well-being, agri-wellness experiences are emerging. These experiences combine the therapeutic benefits of nature with activities such as yoga retreats, wellness workshops, meditation sessions, and farm-based spa treatments.
Sustainable and Regenerative Practices	With growing concern for the environment, agritourism destinations are focusing on sustainable and regenerative farming practices. Visitors are more conscious of their impact on the planet and seek out experiences that align with their values.

Table 5 - Agritourism experiences growing in popularity.

Goonoo Goonoo Station, Tamworth. Credit: Destination NSW.



Agritourism Development Blueprint for Regional NSW

Visitor Markets

The profile of an agritourism consumer is older, affluent, well-educated, and ethnically varied. They prioritise quality food choices and seek accountability from food producers. Additionally, a younger and discerning customer base is emerging, showing increased concerns about the origin and production methods of their food. They are interested in clean, healthy, and sustainably produced food, particularly when it comes to culinary tourism. This group is willing to pay more for unique food experiences that contribute to sustainability, ecosystems, and food equality.

True agritourism visitors can be broadly defined as experience seekers with enrichment, connection and new experiences key drivers for travel decision making. They seek low key, authentic, unique experiences and are willing to travel further and spend more for an experience that ticks all the boxes. They are looking to try something new, bonding with their travel companions along the way. Families are seeking experiences that educate and entertain.

Tourism Australia's Future of Demand research indicates that a significant portion of out-of-region visitors (about one-third) are interested in farm experiences such as farm gate tours, farm stays, and pick-your-own activities. Demand for farm experiences is higher among specific audiences like higher-yielding segments, families (both younger and older) and Working Holiday Makers, especially in Eastern markets.¹⁶ However, interest in farm experiences varies across international markets, ranging from high interest in Singapore to lower interest in Canada, USA and New Zealand.

Aquaculture experiences, such as visiting oyster farms, pearl farms, and fish farms, also attract around one in five out-of-region visitors. Similar to farm experiences, higher-yielding segments and Working Holiday Makers show stronger interest, along with several Eastern markets. Those interested in aquaculture experiences are often families with slightly higher incomes.¹⁷

Innovation and Regeneration Agritourism Practices

Australian farmers are world leaders in agricultural innovation including agritech and the development of smart farms as a testing ground for new technologies, crop rotation techniques and sustainable practices in an effort to minimise environmental impact. Sustainability is front and centre of the agricultural psyche, shaping demand for low-carbon footprint travel options and experiences that touch the earth and its communities lightly, leaving places and people better off than when they arrived.

However, it is no longer just about sustainability and preserving the Earth. Globally there is a shift towards regeneration.¹⁸ Regeneration is a holistic, systems-based approach that seeks to create resilient and regenerative living systems that restore and replenish natural resources, improving the Earth, rather than taking away from it.

From an agricultural perspective, regenerative farming practices are gaining traction around the world, as farmers respond to climate change and look to work in harmony with the land to improve it and create thriving ecosystems. Regenerative agriculture prioritises soil health, biodiversity, and natural processes.¹⁹

With growing concern for the environment and with visitors increasingly more conscious of their impact on the planet, they are seeking out experiences that align with their values. Sustainability is increasingly influencing choices in terms of where to go, how to get there, where to stay and which experiences they engage with at the destination. Tourism Australia's Future of Demand Research found that more than 75% of travellers are committed to sustainability in some way.²⁰

Destinations are slowly shifting to view agritourism through a regenerative lens. Taking a regenerative approach to agritourism development presents opportunities to restore and regenerate nature, culture, communities and places. The diversity and seasonality of agricultural offerings across the country provides opportunities to create unique experiences that showcase destinations. With a groundswell of farmers already exploring regenerative farming practices, there is an opportunity to align this with regenerative agritourism development and create transformational agritourism visitor experience where value of hosting visitors goes beyond economics.

This approach requires innovation and a willingness to experiment and try different ways of doing tourism. It needs to be driven from the grassroots, by communities, with strong leadership and support from the government and the broader ecosystem.

¹⁶ Tourism Australia 2022, *Future of Global Demand Public Report*

¹⁷ Ibid.

¹⁸ Our Land and Water NZ, *How Māori Agribusiness is Leading Aotearoa's Farming Future*

¹⁹ Regenerative Farmers of America, *Regenerative Agriculture - What is it and how can it save the planet?*

²⁰ Tourism Australia 2022, *Future of Global Demand Public Report*

Innovation and Regeneration Agritourism Practices (continued)

An example of this is through permaculture workshops and training at various organisations including [Milkwood](#) in Tasmania (originally located in NSW's South Coast). Permaculture is adapting to a goal of living in functional, meaningful relation to ecosystems in a connected, meaningful way that benefits land, waters, life and community for a fulfilling life. As well as staying on-farm to work through World Wide Opportunities on Organic Farms (WWOOF) which is incredibly popular for backpackers and people interested to learn more about permaculture and organic farming practices. A popular location for this is [Bandusia Retreat](#) in the Hawkesbury, NSW.

Innovation in agribusiness has grown significantly in the last two decades and there are several trends in agribusiness innovation that can connect into agritourism as outlined in Table 6 (note, that these are not too dissimilar to the agritourism ecosystem section on pages 8-11, and the current and future agritourism trends detailed on page. 20).²¹

INNOVATION	DEFINITION
Digital Agriculture	Rise of digital technologies in agriculture, such as precision farming, remote sensing, and data analytics. These advancements enable farmers to optimise their operations, improve resource efficiency, and enhance productivity. In the context of agritourism, digital agriculture can also offer visitors an immersive experience by showcasing these cutting-edge technologies.
Sustainable Farming Practices	Farmers are increasingly adopting eco-friendly practices to minimise their environmental footprint, align to environmental, social, and governance (ESG) goals and promote long-term viability. These sustainable methods, including organic farming, conservation practices, and renewable energy integration, align well with the values of agritourism, as visitors are often interested in experiencing and learning about sustainable farming firsthand.
Value-Added Products	Agribusiness innovation has led to the development of value-added products and services that extend beyond traditional farming. This includes niche products, specialty crops, organic foods, and alternative protein sources. These innovations can attract agritourism visitors seeking unique culinary experiences, farm-to-table dining, or farm-based product purchases.
Experiential Farming	There is a growing interest in experiential farming, where visitors actively participate in farm activities, such as harvesting, animal care, or agri-education. This trend provides an opportunity for agritourism to offer immersive and educational experiences, allowing visitors to gain a deeper understanding of farming practices and appreciate the value of agriculture.
Technology-Driven Agritourism	The convergence of agribusiness innovation and agritourism has given rise to technology-driven experiences. Virtual reality (VR), augmented reality (AR), and interactive displays are being incorporated into farm tours and visitor centres to create engaging and interactive educational experiences. These technologies enable visitors to explore different aspects of agriculture in a unique and captivating manner.

Table 6 - Innovation in agriculture.

Overall, agribusiness innovation and agritourism are closely linked, with the former driving advancements in the agricultural sector while the latter capitalises on these innovations to offer visitors memorable and educational experiences. By embracing technological advancements, sustainable practices, value-added products, and immersive farming experiences, agritourism can continue to thrive and contribute to the evolving landscape of agribusiness.

²¹ Masschallenge 2023, *Agriculture Innovation: 10 Tech Trends to Watch in 2023*

Ricardoes Tomatoes and Strawberries, Port Macquarie. Credit: Destination NSW.



National Best Practice Case Studies

While countries like Italy, France, New Zealand and the United States have well-established agritourism sectors, Australia's unique flora and fauna, coupled with its diverse agricultural practices, make it an increasingly sought-after destination for agritourism enthusiasts. The sector's growth in Australia is likely to continue as more visitors seek authentic and sustainable experiences that connect them with nature and rural communities.

Developed by Sparrowly Group as part of the original document, the following examples illustrate agritourism businesses who are seen as destination and product heroes in the agritourism sector in states across Australia, outside of NSW. Presented are agritourism businesses of differing scales and aspirationalism. The intent of these is to provide guidance as to how others outside of the region are doing it and were identified relative to the size of the agriculture market and diversity in these regions.

Goondiwindi Cotton Farm, QLD

Location: Goondiwindi, Queensland

Produce: Cotton

Value add: Clothing

Facts:

- Rich in history and agriculture, behind the scenes for a guided tour of the town and visit to Goondiwindi Cotton's working cotton farm – "Alcheringa".
- Thirty years ago, Goondiwindi Cotton opened to diversify operations beyond the family farm gate.
- Became very popular in the last year on social media with photoshoots of people within the cotton fields (inspired by sunflowers).

Website: goondiwindicotton.com.au

Tourism Offerings:

- Cotton farm
- Farm tours
- Clothing store

Tinaberries, QLD

Location: Bundaberg, Queensland

Produce: Berries and passionfruit

Value adds: Ice cream and jams

Facts:

- Owned for almost 20 years with strawberries available at the on-site farm shop and distributed to Melbourne and Sydney.
- Features passionfruit, macadamia tree nursery and currently investigating further developments e.g., accommodation.
- Passionate about sustainable production.

Website: tinaberries.com.au

Tourism Offerings:

- Pick your own (Spring)
- Purchase produce (Winter)
- Real fruit ice cream and value add products (year-round)

Macadamias Australia, QLD

Location: Bundaberg, Queensland

Produce: Macadamias

Value adds: Macadamia nut products

Facts:

- The Orchard Tours deliver an insightful immersion into the world of macadamias and sustainable farming, from seed, to tree, to table. Tour guides share their wealth of information on Australia's native nut, and visitor receive a tasting experience and virtual look at the processing.
- Promotes best practice and innovation in growing and value-adding, and markets 100% of its production, providing customers with a consistent and reliable supply of premium quality macadamias with full traceability.
- Universal design principles have been integrated in all aspects.
- The state-of-the-art Visitor Experience Facility includes a Farmgate Shop, Chocolate Viewing Room and chef-designed menu from the in-house cafe.

Website: macadamiasaustralia.net

Tourism Offerings:

- Orchard tours
- Farmgate shop
- Chocolate viewing room
- Cafe and event centre

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Tommerup's Dairy Farm, QLD**Location:** Scenic Rim, Queensland**Produce:** Cows, pigs, chickens**Value adds:** Milk, cheese, eggs**Facts:**

- Sixth generation working dairy farm
- Guests join in on daily milking and feeding chores, offering a genuine working farm holiday experience for guests. Designed to connect with real farms and farm animal, and learn about life on the farm.
- Well known as providing the most authentic farmstay experience for guests.

Website: tommerupsdairyfarm.com.au**Tourism Offerings:**

- Retail shop / farm larder
- Chef visits and farm school (learning experiences)
- Farmstay
- Events and open days

Grandveve, TAS**Location:** Birchs Bay, Tasmania**Produce:** Sheep**Value adds:** Sheep cheese and dairy products, beauty products and spirits**Facts:**

- Identified innovative sustainable solution including wrapping cheese in frozen sheep wool to keep it cold, rather than chemical ice bricks before shipping. They were the first cheesery in the country to use 100% certified home compostable cryovac bags.
- Use all surplus product and waste for other products, for example the pinot paste is made from old pinot pressings and surplus local apples. The sheep whey from the cheesemaking process (thrown out by most cheesemakers) is made into award-winning spirits. Any milk that doesn't pass grading is made into organic body and skincare products.

Website: grandveve.com.au**Tourism Offerings:**

- Sheep milk cheese tastings
- Distillery tastings
- Retail shop
- Sheep milk skin care
- Milking demonstrations (ag-tech)

Green Olive, VIC**Location:** Mornington Peninsula, Victoria**Produce:** Olives, grapes, hops, fruit and vegetables**Value adds:** Olive oil, wine and products**Tourism Offerings:**

- Vineyard and wine tastings
- Olive grove (five varieties – frantoio, leccino, picual, manzanilla and kalamata)
- Farm picnics

Facts:

- Owners since 2002 and since developed to embody an integrated farm experience. Key assets include an established olive grove and vineyard, farm kitchen and store, farm tours and tastings, value add brand of products, cordials, wines, and body care products.
- Actively participates and contributes to the state and national visitor economy.

Website: greenolive.com.au

- Farm tours and tastings
- Hops paddock (soon launching brewery)
- Australian bush food garden
- Farm brand food and body care products

Tilma Group have also developed a series of case studies that may be a useful resource, these are available for the [Bathurst, Oberon and Lithgow Councils](#), and in an [additional webinar series](#). Farmers considered diversifying into agritourism or developing their existing offering are encouraged to speak with their Tourism and Economic Development Managers at their local Council, along with the Business Development Manager at their Destination Network for further advice and guidance that is applicable to their region and local destination.

Local Planning

To leverage the growth of agritourism, cross-regional projects are being undertaken to engage producers, identify potential new products, elevate existing offerings and forge partnerships for promotion. Supporting agricultural producers to capitalise on planning reforms and develop standout agritourism offerings showcasing the regions strengths is a priority.

The then NSW Department of Planning and Environment introduced simplified planning regulations in December 2022 designed to make it easier for farmers in NSW to use their land for tourism activities such as farm experiences, cellar doors and farm stay accommodation. The prior planning framework posed significant obstacles for farmers wanting to diversify into agritourism. Restrictive land use terms and their application to non-urban areas, often resulted in high costs, limited possibilities, and discouragement of investment and innovation in the sector. The proposed planning amendments delivered in 2021 aimed to address these issues and concerns.

Local Environment Plans and Zoning

For each of the LGAs across regional NSW, there are different environments and political considerations in relation to agritourism. The reforms help landowners where the main use of their land is the production of agricultural goods for commercial purposes. Existing agritourism operations that are already lawfully operating will not be impacted by these policy changes.

In addition to development standards, agritourism and farm stay accommodation can only be carried out as exempt or complying development in the zones in the council's LEP:

- RU1 (Primary Production)
- RU2 (Rural Landscape)
- RU4 (Primary Production Small Lots).

Council's could elect to include additional zones to allow for agritourism under their own LEPs.

Agritourism planning reforms as part of the State Environmental Planning Policies (SEPP) have been implemented and have been reviewed alongside amendments to LEPs and council updates to their DCPs. The State Environmental Planning Policy Amendment (Agritourism) 2023²⁸ published on 18 August details initial changes to LEPs.

Figure 4 outlines the process for how the SEPP, LEP and DCP sit alongside each other and where the agritourism reforms allow for developments.

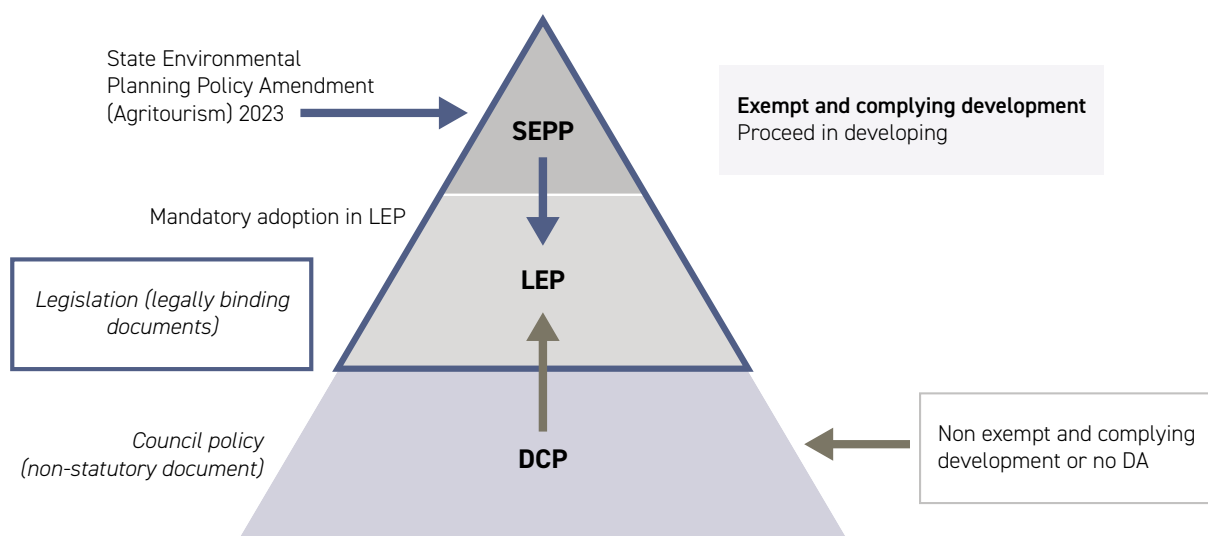


Figure 4 - NSW Legislative planning policies incorporating agritourism development.

Local Assets

Local assets such as showgrounds, town halls, and other council-owned assets can play a crucial role in supporting agriculture and agritourism opportunities. The strategic utilisation of council-owned assets in a regional area can support agriculture and agritourism by providing platforms for marketing, education, infrastructure, and community collaboration. This enhances the visibility, viability, and growth of the agricultural sector while creating unique and engaging experiences for visitors. Consideration will need to be given in activating local assets to land ownership and management as well as permissible use.

Some potential ways these assets can be utilised include:

- **Event Hosting** - Showgrounds and town halls can serve as venues for agricultural shows, farmers markets, provide food festivals, and other agritourism-related events. These events provide opportunities for local farmers, producers, and artisans to showcase their products and attract visitors from both within and outside the region. This facilitates knowledge sharing, partnership building, and the exchange of ideas, ultimately strengthening the agricultural community and fostering agritourism opportunities.
- **Infrastructure for Farmers Markets** - Showgrounds or other council-owned assets can be used to establish regular farmers markets where local farmers and producers can sell their fresh produce, artisanal products, and locally made goods. This creates a direct connection between consumers and agricultural businesses, promoting local economic development and supporting the viability of farming operations. This appeals to those farmers and producers who do not want to engage in an 'on-farm' experience or have the infrastructure for farm gate premises for a retail opportunity.
- **Community Assets** - These assets (e.g. libraries and community halls) can be used to conduct workshops, training sessions, and educational programs for farmers and agribusinesses. Suggested topics include: sustainable farming practices, innovative agricultural techniques, value-added product development, experience development and marketing for agritourism.
- **Hubs, Incubation and Shared Spaces** - Council-owned assets can be repurposed to provide incubation spaces for new agricultural businesses, startups, or small-scale farmers or as a location for agri-hubs. These shared spaces can offer access to equipment, processing facilities, storage, and co-working spaces. By providing affordable infrastructure, the council encourages innovation and entrepreneurship in the agricultural sector. With reliable connectivity, these sites could help to bridge a gap and major challenge that many farmers face.

Consideration should be made for sites that are not council owned and managed and that are NSW National Parks or agricultural society/show group sites as well and their ability for their venues to be hired and used.

It is recommended that sites that are council-owned and managed are preferred to hire and use for agritourism activation, preferably at showground spaces. This should not be managed by the Destination Networks but through local collective groups if there is a need for a communal space.

The exception is for areas that could act as a hub/incubation or shared space, as a way for farmers to have better access to connectivity and business support services. A community hall or library with these facilities would be strongly recommended as ways that council can partner with operators on for agritourism development.

Considerations

Opportunity vs. Reality

While developing agritourism supports objectives of multiple state, regional and local plans and strategies, it is not something that should be considered and developed in isolation.

The relationship between agriculture, tourism development and regional communities is symbiotic however, functionally the environment in which these two industries operate is different.

The agritourism offering forms part of the destination story, it is one of the many reasons to visit the region. Development of complementary and supporting experiences should be considered as part of the agritourism opportunity, ensuring that there is a well-rounded range of experiences on offer. As such a holistic approach needs to be taken for agritourism development.

For many farmers, diversifying into agritourism is a new proposition, it will take time to build relationships and trust. A long-term approach needs to be taken to identify, nurture and educate farmers to develop new agritourism experiences. There is no one size fits all approach to development of on-farm experiences. Just as each farm is unique – whether it be the location, what is produced, the farming methods or the stories, the experiences that are developed also need to be unique and true to the farm.

The challenges that farmers face when considering diversifying into agritourism, or expanding an existing offering, are largely relevant to all sectors of the tourism industry. These include the ability to attract capital and other funding, labour shortages and housing availability, staff skill sets and training, and rising costs. For working farms there are additional complexities of biosecurity, legislative and tax regulations associated with primary production and supply chain logistics. It is a complex ecosystem that supports agribusiness and in turn agritourism development and there are a lot of moving parts that enable it to occur.

When developing a roadmap for future development, it is important to have clarity around the roles and responsibilities of all stakeholders involved. Opportunities and development pathways have been developed with a clear understanding of what each stakeholder controls and where they are able to influence top of mind. Figure 5 outlines the Enablement Framework which demonstrates how the various stakeholders contribute to enabling success in agritourism with consideration for broader agriculture as the foundation industry for farmers.

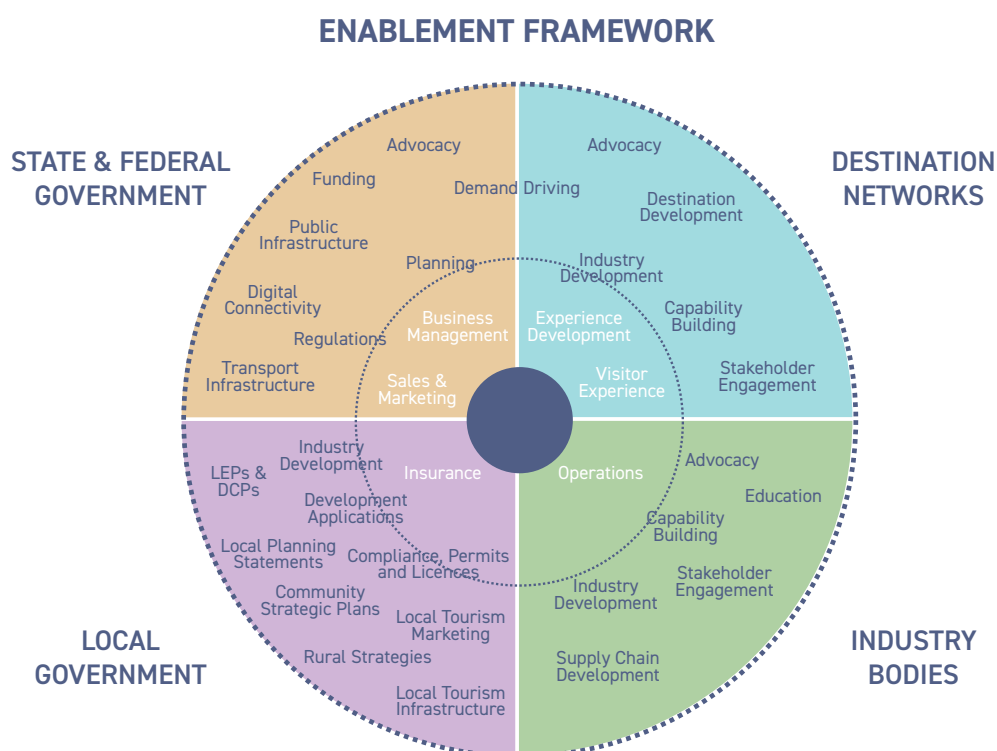


Figure 5 - Enablement framework for key stakeholders, note the inner circle is the farmers' sole responsibility.

Agritourism Development Blueprint for Regional NSW

Pathways

There are five key areas of development to maximise agritourism opportunities, as outlined in Figure 6. These have been designed to fill identified gaps and support sustainable growth of the sector. They are also aligned with outcomes of various state, regional and local plans, including the NSW Visitor Economy Strategy 2035 and regional Destination Management Plans.



Figure 6 - Priority areas for agritourism development.



Italian Cooking Experience with Stefano Marvello, Bowral. Credit: Destination NSW.

Stakeholder Matrix

To ensure long-term success and implementation of agritourism education and product/experience development opportunities, Table 7 outlines key stakeholders, their level of interest and influence.

STAKEHOLDER	LEVEL OF INTEREST	LEVEL OF INFLUENCE
Industry Associations, eg. NSW Farmers. Australian Farmers Federation, AgEdge, AgriFutures	Medium	High
Farming Groups, eg. Agricultural Show Societies, Farmers Markets, Landcare Groups	Low	High
Destination Networks	High	Medium
Local Councils	Medium	High
Support agencies and other government departments, eg. RDA, Local Land Services	Medium	Low
Destination NSW	High	High
NSW Dept of Planning, Housing and Infrastructure	Medium	High
NSW Dept of Primary Industries and Regional Development	Medium	High
Revenue NSW (Dept of Customer Service)	Medium	High
Second tier rural support bodies eg. CWA, Rural Women's Network, Australian Women in Agriculture, Australian Rural Leadership Foundation	Medium	Medium

Table 7 - Stakeholder matrix for agritourism development.

Newport Cotton Farm, Moree. Credit: Destination NSW.

Industry Development Framework

Long-term industry development and capability building are essential for farmers and existing agritourism operators. This is led by the Destination Networks, with support from Destination NSW programming, to establish trust by ensuring high-quality experiences and products.

It enables and encourages both traditional on-farm authentic agritourism and broader gastronomic and untraditional 'rural' tourism experiences, enabling them to diversify their offerings and attract a broader range of visitors, thereby expanding their business potential.

There are various audiences to factor in for industry development through both a dedicated agritourism and broader visitor economy development lens from both on and off farm as in Table 8.

ON-FARM EXPERIENCE DEVELOPMENT	OFF-FARM EXPERIENCE DEVELOPMENT
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Existing operators expanding offerings New and potential operators (farmers) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Gastronomic tourism products Other tourism experiences (broader agritourism ecosystem)

Table 8 - Audiences for experience development.

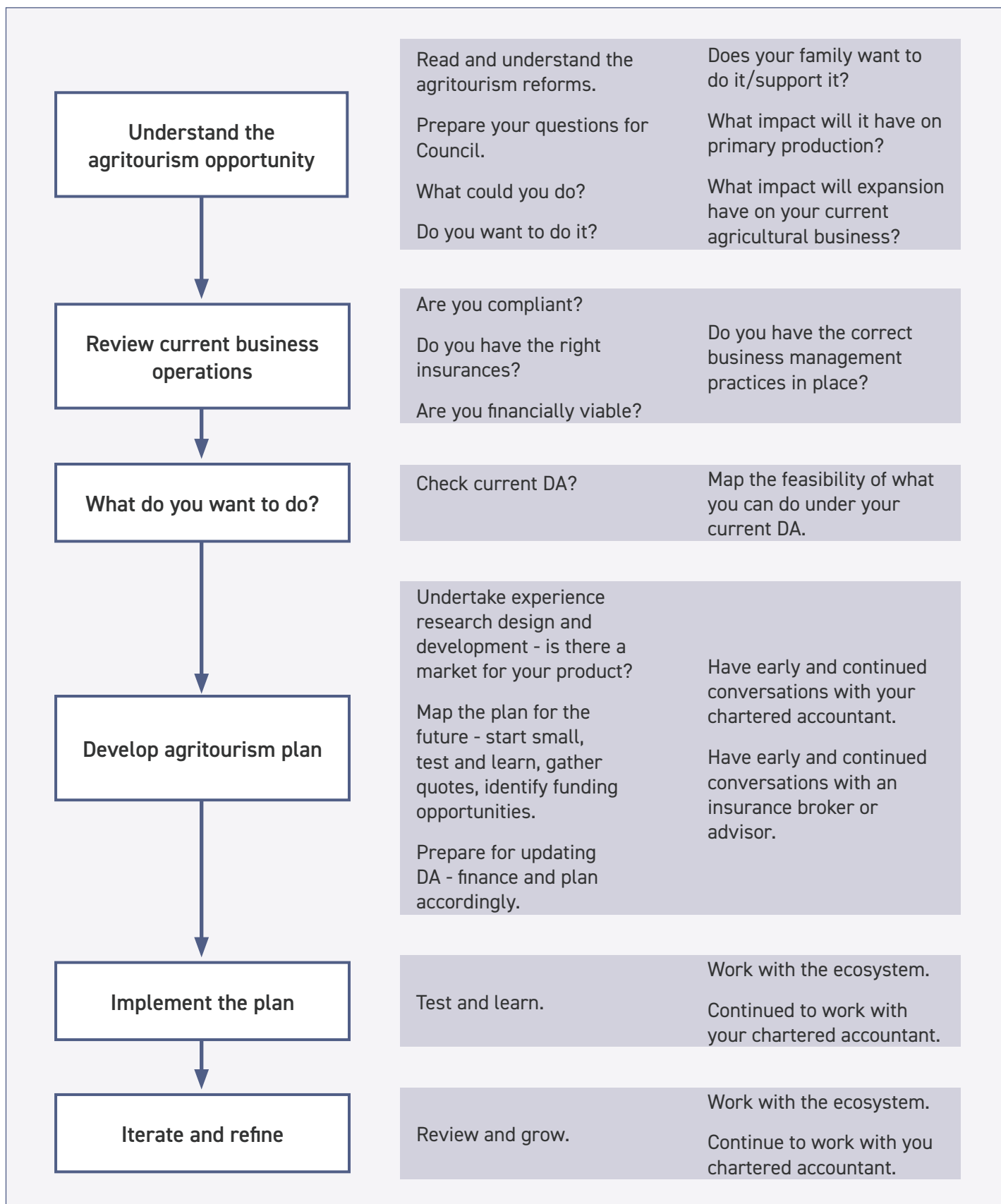
There are many operators who fit in the 'off-farm' agritourism who provide on-rural land experiences but agriculture is not the core business income, who still require broader industry development and capability building. These experiences are important from an overarching visitor experience in line with the visitor definition, and should not be excluded from development. In particular, working with the visitor economy ecosystem will be valuable for these operators and the industry more broadly in driving appeal and demand.

Whilst similar, the pathways are different with farmers requiring more time to plan and think about whether agritourism is the right pathway for them. There is extensive work that should be undertaken before launching into agritourism experience development. Similarly, for existing operators, often when and if they want to expand they will move straight into development rather than reviewing and assessing business viability and feasibility.



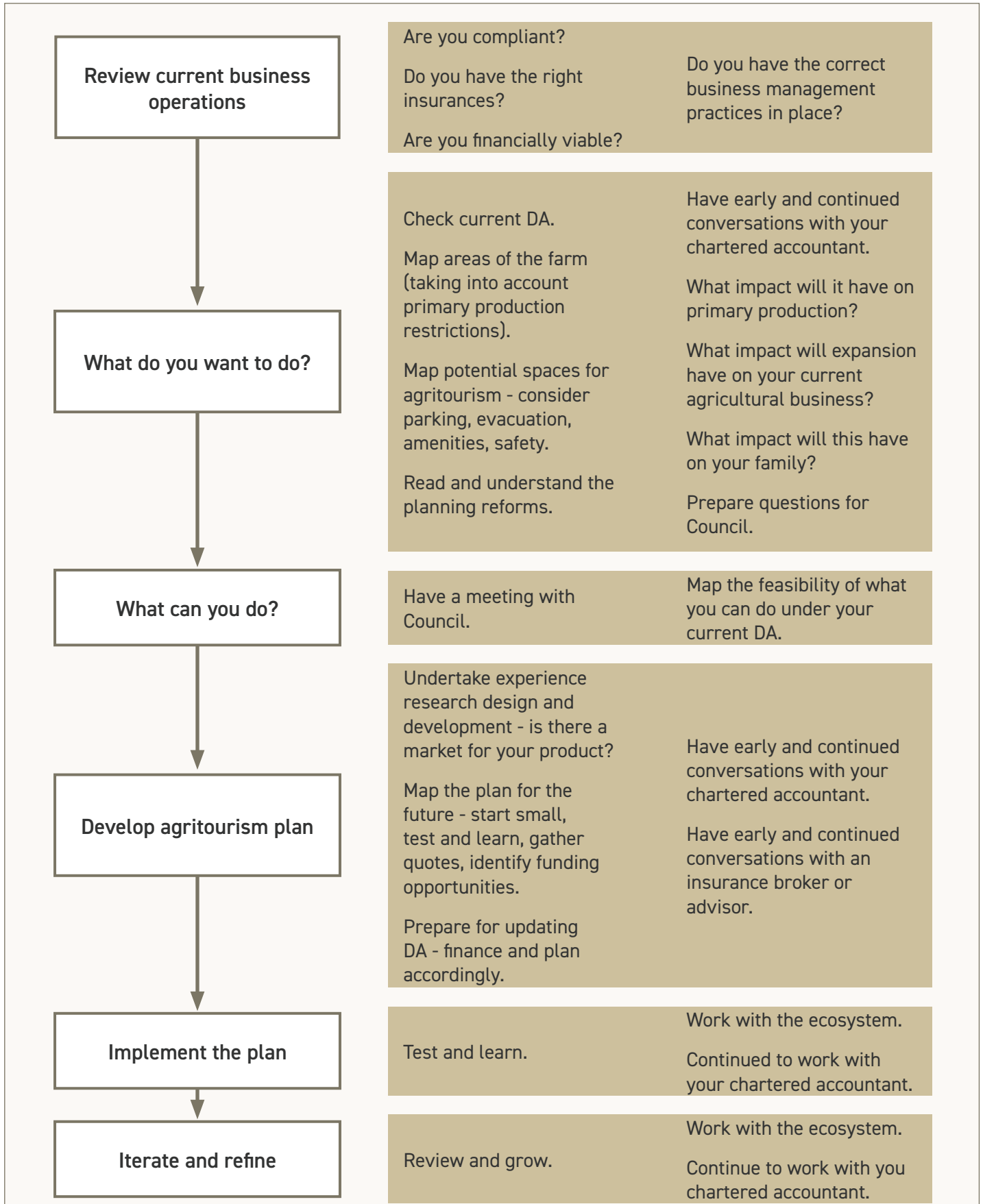
Glenburnie Orchard, Dackin Orchard, Waggoner Farm

Farmers Product Development Pathway



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Existing Operators Product Development Pathway



Destination Network Agritourism Action Plan

Additional Operators

For those products and experiences that deliver experiences on rural land but where agriculture is not the primary focus, pathways for experience development (compliant with planning regulations) along the tourism business readiness cycle is encouraged.

The Destination Networks play a key role in industry development and capability building. Pathways and recommendations are outlined in Table 9.

FOCUS AREA	RECOMMENDATION
Build the connection - Visitor Economy	Connect to Industry Development Managers / Business Development Managers for broader opportunities (resources, events, etc).
Build the connection - Local Government	Connect operators to council planning teams to establish relationships and ensure compliance through DAs.
Build the connection - local collaboration	Encourage cross-industry collaboration to showcase a regional representation of local produce for an overarching visitor experience. For example, encourage accommodation operators to buy local fresh produce for guests, encourage farm to fork cooking classes or events with local restaurants or event spaces.
Provide business support guidance	Provide education, guidance and referral support through sharing of resources, funding opportunities, industry events based on business needs. Support available includes guidance provided by the Business Development Managers at the Destination Networks and by Destination NSW through the product development team, and through the NSW First program.

Table 9 - Areas for development for broader industry development.



Emu Logic, Tooraweenah. Credit: Destination NSW.

Sydney Oyster Farm Tours, Mooney Mooney. Credit: Destination NSW.



Destination Networks

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*Adapted from original document
developed by:*