

# WINE TASMANIA

PROMOTING THE COOLEST  
WINE REGION ON THE PLANET.

## WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT

2025-2030

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DISCUSSION PAPER

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# WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT 2025-2030

## DISCUSSION PAPER

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## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

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Workforce planning is an integral and ongoing element of any successful industry. For Tasmania’s wine sector, one of the state’s most distinctive and internationally recognised industries, it represents a natural progression in strengthening what already works well, anticipating future needs, and ensuring that the people who shape Tasmanian wine can continue to do so with confidence and capability.

Over the past decade, Tasmania’s wine producers have achieved remarkable growth, diversification, and reputation. The quality of Tasmanian wine is now firmly established on the global stage, supported by producers who combine craftsmanship with innovation and a deep sense of place. This success has been underpinned by a skilled, committed, and adaptive workforce, from vineyard operators and winemakers to cellar door staff, logistics specialists, and business leaders.

As the industry looks to the next five years, the focus of workforce planning is to build on the strong foundations already

in place. The sector has demonstrated resilience through changing conditions, from the challenges of a tight labour market to shifting tourism patterns and climatic variability. Wine Tasmania and its members are already engaged in ongoing initiatives to support skills development, leadership growth, and regional collaboration. This discussion paper seeks to consolidate that work, providing a shared framework for aligning future activity, identifying emerging priorities, and ensuring that workforce development remains a strategic enabler of the industry’s continued success.

The *Wine Tasmania Workforce Development Discussion Paper (2025–2030)* brings together insights from recent industry consultations and initiatives to present a coherent picture of the sector now and focus areas for the future. It does not attempt to prescribe detailed actions or impose rigid solutions; rather, it provides a foundation for coordinated effort and ongoing dialogue between the industry, training providers, aligned sectors and government partners.



## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

*The purpose of this discussion paper is threefold:*

1. **To recognise and build upon the work already underway.** The Tasmanian wine industry has invested heavily in developing leadership programs, strengthening connections with training providers, and collaborating across sectors such as tourism and hospitality. This paper acknowledges these achievements and places them within a broader, strategic framework.
2. **To identify areas for refinement and collaboration.** Within a growing industry there is capacity for collaboration, particularly in aligning training delivery, increasing access for regional businesses, and promoting the industry as a long-term career choice.
3. **To position workforce development as a shared responsibility.** Effective workforce planning depends on shared purpose. The discussion paper highlights where Wine Tasmania can lead, where it will partner, and where broader policy or system engagement is required.

Wine Tasmania understands that workforce planning is a journey of continuous improvement. The current scoping of workforce development needs and opportunities does not mark a beginning or an end, but rather a commitment to staying attentive and responsive to change. By consolidating lessons from previous strategies and

aligning future actions with the industry's broader strategic direction, the sector will continue to evolve in step with its markets, its environment, and its people.

The *Wine Tasmania Workforce Development Discussion Paper (2025–2030)* is developed based on the maturity of the industry. It recognises an industry that is strong, stable, and ambitious, one that understands that success is sustained through continuous investment in people and partnerships. By embedding workforce development into strategic thinking and aligning efforts across the sector, Tasmania's wine industry can continue to thrive, not just as a producer of exceptional wines, but as a leader in sustainable, people-focused regional development.



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## **INTRODUCTION & BACKGROUND**

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The Tasmanian wine industry plays a central role in the island’s economic and cultural landscape. With more than 160 licensed producers and around 230 vineyards, the sector employs over a thousand people directly and supports many more through tourism, logistics, and hospitality. Tasmania’s reputation as a premium cool-climate region continues to attract investment, visitors, and acclaim. Alongside this success story is the need to understand emerging workforce pressures that may contribute to constraining future growth.

The last formal workforce plan for the industry was developed in 2013. In the decade since, the industry has undergone profound change. The COVID-19 pandemic reshaped employment expectations, while cost-of-living and housing pressures have intensified regional workforce competition. Education and training delivery has become increasingly centralised, and demographic trends show an ageing workforce with limited succession pipelines. This paper recognises that these issues are interconnected, addressing one without the other will not deliver sustainable outcomes.

Through consultations led by Wine Tasmania in 2025, members consistently expressed a desire for a practical, collaborative approach that recognises the industry’s regional diversity. Participants emphasised the need for accessible training, stronger promotion of career pathways, better coordination with tourism and agriculture,

and advocacy on structural barriers such as housing and visa policy. These insights form the foundation for the analysis and discussion provided in this paper.

Workforce development should be viewed as a strategic and evolutionary process: continuous, evidence-based, and grounded in the needs of the industry through regular consultation. Just as vineyard planning considers the seasons, climate, and soil, workforce planning considers the people, skills, and systems that sustain quality and innovation.

The industry’s reputation creates a strong platform for attraction. Tasmanian wine is synonymous with quality, integrity, and sustainability — values that appeal not only to consumers but to prospective employees seeking meaningful and place-based work. These inherent advantages mean the sector begins its next phase of workforce development from a position of strength.

The Tasmanian wine sector is well placed to take a strategic view of its people, recognising that future growth will depend as much on cultivating skills and leadership as it does on maintaining product quality and market presence. By building on existing initiatives, deepening collaboration across sectors, and maintaining a long-term focus on regional capability, Tasmania’s wine industry can ensure it continues to be a source of excellence, innovation, and sustainable employment for generations to come.

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## THE WORKFORCE TODAY

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Tasmania’s wine sector represents one of Australia’s most dynamic regional industries — small in scale but outsized in its contribution to value, reputation, and regional employment. The island’s wine producers have built a sector defined by both innovation and tradition, with a clear strategic focus on quality over quantity. Tasmanian wine sits within the premium market segment, commanding a reputation that consistently exceeds production volumes

### **AN INDUSTRY OF HIGH VALUE & HIGH COMPLEXITY**

Although Tasmania accounts for only 1.3% of Australia’s total wine production by volume, it contributes over 6% of the national farmgate value. This distinction highlights the premium nature of the sector. Yet, the sector’s value and reputation come with corresponding challenges. It is among the most labour-intensive and operationally complex wine regions in the country. The long ripening period characteristic of Tasmania’s cool climate extends vineyard management cycles, while the emphasis on hand-picking and precision viticulture adds to labour intensity and production costs.

Most Tasmanian wine businesses are small to medium enterprises that operate integrated models encompassing viticulture, winemaking, marketing, logistics, and cellar door operations. This integration generates efficiency and control

over quality but requires a workforce that can move flexibly between roles and across seasons. Workers often take on hybrid functions, pruning and vineyard maintenance in winter, winemaking during vintage, and cellar door or tourism roles during the visitor season. The result is a workforce that is both adaptable and specialised, one that must continuously develop skills across multiple disciplines.

### **WORKFORCE PROFILE & ECONOMIC FOOTPRINT**

The sector currently supports an estimated direct 3,600 jobs across vineyard, winery and cellar door roles (the 8<sup>th</sup> largest Tasmanian employer). It is notable that Tasmania is the only Australian wine-producing state to record an increase in both total employment and female participation in vineyard roles over the past decade.

Beyond direct employment, wine acts as a powerful regional economic driver. Virtually every community across the island is linked to the sector, whether through production, packaging, logistics, or tourism. Nearly one in four visitors to Tasmania includes a cellar door experience in their itinerary, and these visitors spend on average 1.5 times more than other travellers. This tourism interface magnifies the social and economic reach of the sector, reinforcing its importance to Tasmania’s regional identity and prosperity.

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## THE WORKFORCE TODAY

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### CURRENT WORKFORCE DYNAMICS

The 2025 Wine Tasmania Workforce Survey revealed a sector that is stable but under moderate and persistent workforce pressure. Many producers report that they can meet day-to-day labour needs during off-peak periods; however, labour shortages intensify sharply during harvest and pruning, with nearly half of respondents indicating difficulty securing sufficient seasonal workers. The challenges are particularly acute for supervisory, machinery operation, cellar, and vineyard management roles, which require higher technical skill levels. Seasonal peaks require a workforce that can be rapidly mobilised and managed within a relatively short timeframe.

In practice, many businesses rely on a combination of local labour, interstate contractors, and international visa holders, particularly Working Holiday Makers. However, the industry continues to face barriers in visa and industrial relations settings that constrain workforce flexibility. For example, under current visa rules, cellar door, hospitality, and winery roles do not count toward working holiday visa extensions, despite being essential to the integrated business model typical of Tasmanian producers. These limitations, alongside the postcodes anomaly excluding certain East Coast regions (e.g., 7190), continue to disadvantage the State’s small and remote wine communities.

### REGIONAL & STRUCTURAL BARRIERS

The survey data and member feedback also point to region-specific barriers. Housing shortages, transport limitations, and the cost of living are significant constraints, particularly for young workers and seasonal staff. Employers report losing potential recruits who are unable to find affordable accommodation near vineyards, with several noting that “there is no housing available, and those who might take the jobs simply can’t stay locally.” Transport access is another limiting factor; many vineyards are located outside major towns, with little or no public transit options.

Such challenges reflect broader structural issues within Tasmania’s regional labour markets rather than problems unique to wine. However, they affect small producers more severely because their scale limits their ability to absorb higher costs or offer housing subsidies. These factors compound existing workforce pressures and influence both attraction and retention outcomes.

### SKILLS & TRAINING LANDSCAPE

Across all regions, the survey identified a consistent call for fit-for-purpose training – short, practical, and locally delivered programs that reflect the seasonal rhythm of the industry. Employers expressed a high-interest for micro-credentials and modular learning, particularly in pruning, tractor operation, cellar safety, and team leadership.

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## THE WORKFORCE TODAY

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However, access remains uneven, and participation is often hindered by cost, travel distance, and time constraints.

Employers also noted a growing need for supervisory and leadership skills, as businesses expand and younger staff step into management roles. There is strong support for Wine Tasmania’s leadership programs, including *I-LEAD Tassie Wine* and *Bubbling Up*, which have helped to build capability and confidence across small and family-run businesses. Many producers emphasised that leadership training is essential not only for business performance but for sustaining the cooperative, community-based culture that underpins the Tasmanian wine identity.

### DEMOGRAPHICS & GENERATIONAL CHANGE

Demographically, the workforce reflects a mix of continuity and transition. Many of Tasmania’s vineyard managers, winemakers, and business owners are highly experienced professionals nearing retirement, having been part of the sector’s rapid growth over the past 20 years. At the same time, younger and mid-career workers are entering the industry through pathways such as cellar door roles, technical training, and cross-sector movement from tourism or hospitality.

Retention, however, remains inconsistent. Limited career progression, the physical nature of vineyard work,

and competition from other industries continue to influence turnover rates. Several employers expressed concern about maintaining long-term capability as experienced workers exit the sector. Addressing this generational shift through mentoring, leadership pipelines, and structured on-the-job learning will be crucial to maintaining quality and operational resilience.

### A WORKFORCE BUILT ON QUALITY & ADAPTATION

Tasmania’s wine workforce today is skilled, committed, and central to the State’s brand identity. It operates in a high-cost, high-value environment that rewards excellence but requires careful management of labour and capability. The challenges it faces, from housing and transport to training access and policy alignment, are indicators of an industry operating at the leading edge of premium production.

The task for the coming years is to ensure that the people who power Tasmania’s wine industry can continue to do so sustainably. This requires building on existing strengths: collaborative culture, regional identity, and shared purpose, while refining the systems that support training, leadership, and workforce stability. In this way, workforce development becomes not just a response to need, but a natural continuation of the industry’s long-term pursuit of excellence.

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## THE WORKFORCE TODAY

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The 2025 industry survey findings reveal a workforce with a range of pressure points. While many businesses report sufficient staffing during off-peak periods, nearly half struggle to recruit skilled labour during harvest or to fill supervisory roles. The reliance on short-term visa holders and interstate labour remains high, reflecting ongoing challenges in attracting local workers to physical, outdoor, and regionally based roles. At the same time, businesses identify growing demand for customer-facing roles as cellar doors and wine tourism continue to expand.

Demographically, the workforce is ageing, with many experienced vineyard and winemaking professionals approaching retirement. Younger workers are entering the industry, but retention remains inconsistent due to limited career progression, housing affordability issues, and competition from other industries. These dynamics point to a need for both immediate practical support and longer-term strategies to cultivate the next generation of wine professionals.



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## WHAT THE SECTOR TOLD US: SURVEY INSIGHTS IN DETAIL

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The 2025 Workforce Survey captured a broad cross-section of industry views, representing small family-owned vineyards through to large-scale producers. Across 44 responses, several consistent themes emerged: workforce shortages, limited training access, and low visibility of wine careers among younger Tasmanians. Businesses reported strong confidence in the sector’s future but some frustration with the obstacles preventing growth.

Attraction and retention issues dominate. Seasonal employment cycles make it difficult to offer year-round stability, and there is a perception that many potential workers are deterred by the physical nature of vineyard work. Employers identified housing shortages and transport limitations as barriers, particularly in rural regions. Survey data showed that four out of five businesses struggle to find suitably skilled vineyard operators, while one-third find it difficult to fill cellar door or production roles. Leadership and mid-level management positions also remain a challenge, as the industry competes for talent with (perceived) higher-paying sectors.

“ Given Vineyard and vintage wine work is extremely seasonal we require extra workers at specific times of the year and quiet or no work in between which makes it heavily reliant on casuals/seasonal workers when the workload is high. A lot of people want constant part time to full time employment in our area if they are local and the casual and seasonal workers are usually backpackers and require accommodation which makes it tricky in remote areas away from the cities to house them.

Smaller operations are also finding it hard competing with the bigger vineyards as obviously people are going to gather there first as they have more work for more people. ”

– Survey Respondent

**WHAT THE SECTOR TOLD US: SURVEY INSIGHTS IN DETAIL**

Training emerged as both a challenge and an opportunity. Employers expressed a clear appetite for more flexible, industry-driven training delivered locally. Short courses in pruning, machinery operation, and cellar techniques were most in demand, alongside supervisory and compliance

training. However, confidence in existing training options remains modest, with most respondents describing them as insufficiently tailored to the realities of small business operations or the seasonal rhythm of the industry.

**Current Conditions**

*Survey responses on current conditions (respondents could select multiple answers):*



**WORKFORCE CHALLENGES**

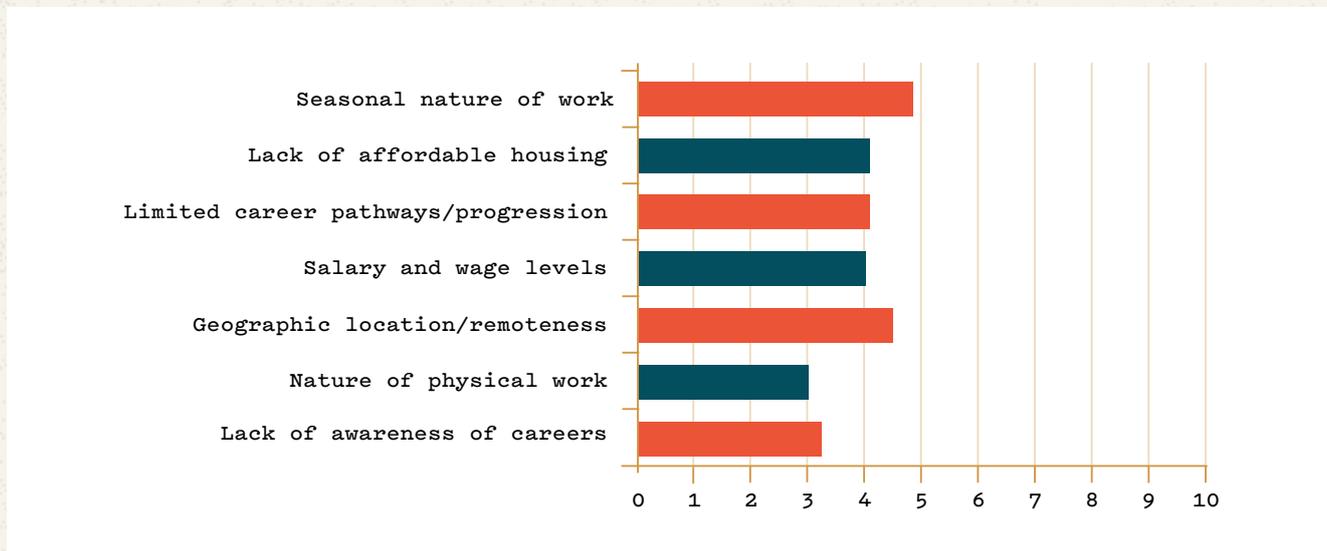
As highlighted in the previous section, the Tasmanian wine sector faces a range of interrelated workforce challenges. The first is labour availability. Seasonal peaks, particularly during pruning and vintage, expose shortfalls in skilled labour. This seasonal volatility undermines productivity and adds administrative and financial pressure. Producers increasingly rely on contract or migrant workers, yet visa restrictions and postcode anomalies limit flexibility. There are also anomalies in employment conditions between (wine

grape) vineyard roles and (table grape) vineyard roles under the Horticulture Award, creating inequality across viticulture, horticulture businesses and contractors.

Housing and infrastructure shortages compound these issues. In regions such as the Coal River Valley and East Coast, affordable accommodation for staff is scarce. Transport options are limited, with few public connections to vineyards. These challenges discourage local participation and increase costs for employers who must provide or subsidise accommodation.

Challenges

Survey responses on key challenges (respondents could select multiple answers):



“Accommodation for seasonal workers to stay in area is an issue for us on the coast.”

– Survey Respondent

“Housing and accommodation is also an issue. We are trying to look into ways of fitting out even our shearing shed quarters to be able to house people”

– Survey Respondent

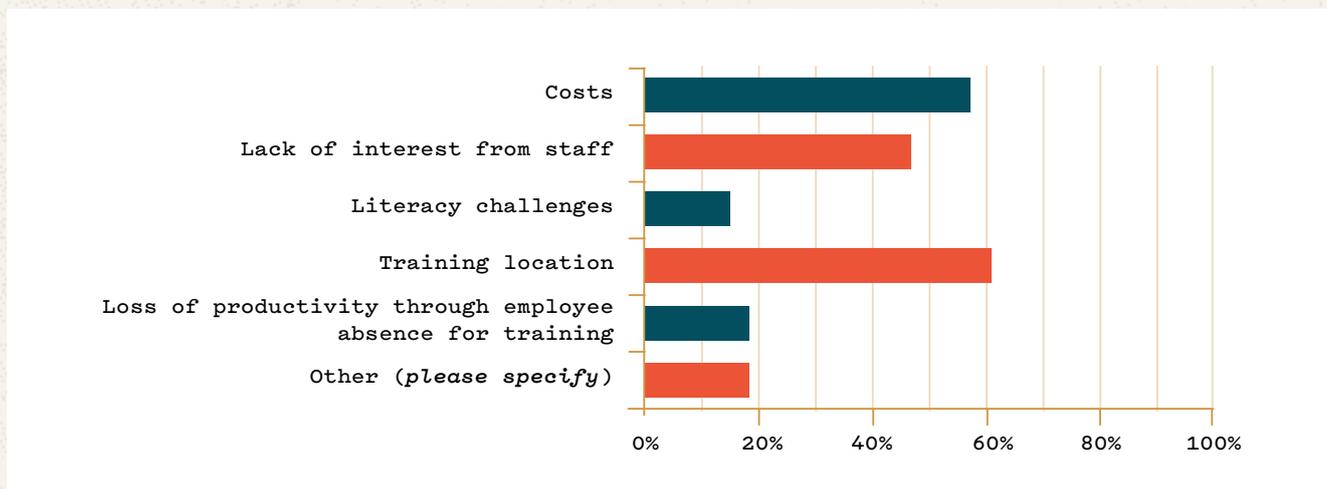
## WORKFORCE CHALLENGES

The sector also grapples with training, access and relevance. Existing vocational education and training pathways often fail to align with the industry’s technical requirements. Training providers face

difficulty attracting enough students to deliver regional courses, while producers find travel and cost prohibitive. The result is a gap between the skills the industry needs and the qualifications on offer.

### Training Challenges

Survey responses on training challenges (respondents could select multiple answers):



“ Practical training that can be immediately implemented (such as cellar door sales training). Machinery operation such as tractor driving also important. ”

– Survey Respondent

“ Skills training and career pathways through training, leading teams, dealing with poor performers, project management, train the trainer etc. ”

– Survey Respondent

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## WORKFORCE CHALLENGES

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Finally, there is a perception challenge. While Tasmania's wine enjoys global prestige, but few young people are aware of the potential for and/or view it as a long-term career option. The sector's image is often one of seasonal labour rather than professional opportunity. Changing this narrative, by showcasing career progression and the lifestyle benefits of working in wine, will be crucial to building a sustainable workforce pipeline.

“ We retain key staff (Vineyard, Cellar Door, winery) well, but when staff do leave it is very difficult to recruit replacements. A vineyard Manager/Supervisor has proven particularly difficult. ”

– Survey Respondent

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## OPPORTUNITIES

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Despite these challenges, the Tasmanian wine industry has strong foundations on which to build. Its premium reputation, international recognition, and integration with the tourism sector create significant opportunities to attract new workers. The sector can reposition itself as a hub for skilled, purpose-driven employment in regional Tasmania. Collaboration with tourism, hospitality, and agriculture opens the door to shared solutions for training, accommodation, and career promotion.

“ Shortage of trained/qualified vineyard managers/viticulturists a real issue - need to really focus on this as a valid career pathway for school leavers. ”

– Survey Respondent

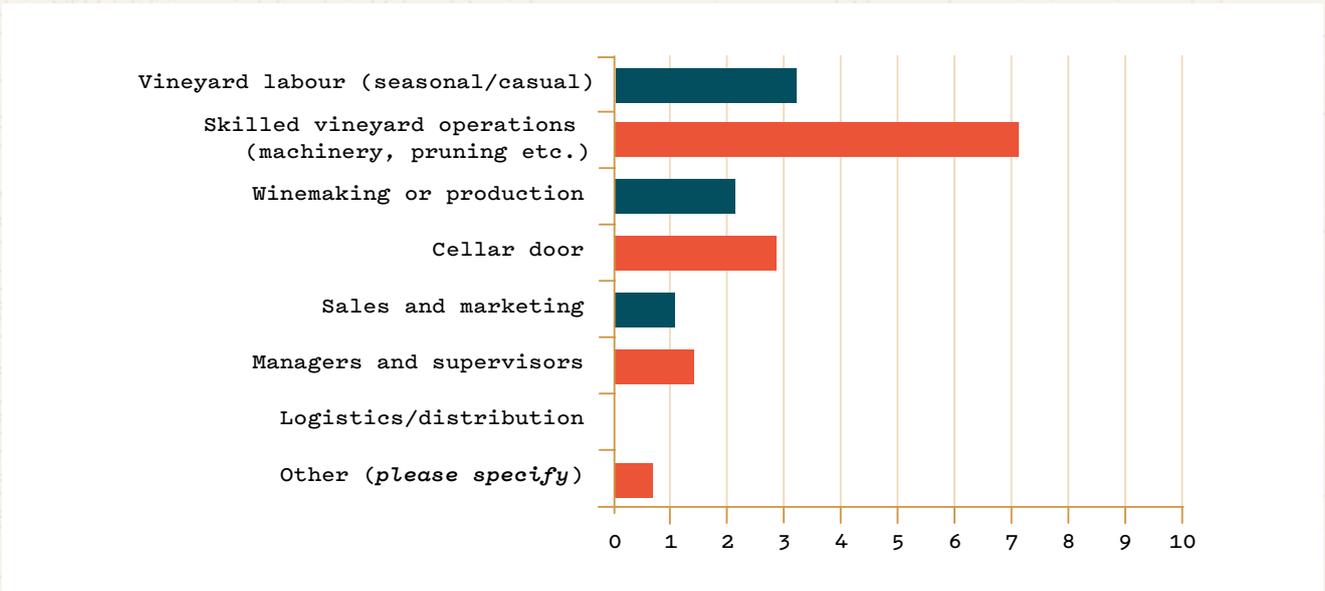
There is potential in expanding micro-credentials and modular training formats. These can provide fast, accessible upskilling without the time and cost of full qualifications. Digital tools, such as online job boards and a dedicated training hub, can improve access to opportunities and resources across regions. Promoting leadership development programs, mentoring schemes, and succession planning will help transfer knowledge between generations and sustain industry culture.

Finally, Tasmania's unique lifestyle and environmental credentials offer a strong attraction narrative. By framing wine industry careers as both professionally rewarding and environmentally meaningful, the sector can appeal to a new generation seeking purpose-driven work.

**OPPORTUNITIES**

Skills Needs/Opportunities

Survey responses on skills required (respondents could select multiple answers):



### MEASURING SUCCESS – THE NEXT FIVE YEARS

By 2030, success for Tasmania’s wine industry will be measured not only by the number of people employed, but by the quality, confidence, and sustainability of its workforce. The next five years represent an opportunity to embed workforce development as a consistent part of industry planning, ensuring that people, skills, and culture evolve in step with market and environmental change.

Success will not be a single headline figure. It will be reflected in how effectively the sector retains knowledge, builds new capability, and continues to attract talented individuals who see long-term careers in Tasmanian wine. The goal is a workforce that is locally grounded, globally competitive, and continually learning, one that supports the ongoing reputation of Tasmanian wine as among the most respected in the world.

Success in delivering on these priorities requires clear delineation of areas that will be led by Wine Tasmania versus areas where partnership with other industries or organisations is required.

Wine Tasmania will continue to lead in areas where coordination, communication, and member engagement are key strengths, while advocating alongside government, training, tourism and other aligned industry partners to address systemic barriers.

*The seven key workforce development focus areas are outlined here:*

#### 1. A Capable & Confident Workforce

By 2030, Tasmania’s wine workforce should be recognised for its depth of capability and professional standing. This means a workforce that is highly skilled across technical, business, and leadership domains, supported by structured pathways for professional development.

Success will be evident when producers of all sizes, from family vineyards to large enterprises, report confidence in their ability to access, develop, and retain staff with the skills required for their operations.

*Indicators could include:*

- Increased participation in recognised training and micro-credentials, particularly in viticulture, winemaking, cellar operations, machinery use, and team supervision.
- A rise in the number of industry participants engaged in professional development programs, such as I-LEAD Tassie Wine or sector-led mentoring initiatives.
- Improved industry satisfaction with training relevance and delivery, captured through biennial member surveys.
- Consistent productivity and quality standards across vintages, demonstrating a capable and adaptive workforce able to maintain excellence despite changing seasonal conditions.

## MEASURING SUCCESS – THE NEXT FIVE YEARS

This focus on capability is not about just qualifications, but about confidence, ensuring that workers, regardless of their background or tenure, feel valued, skilled, and part of a professional community.

### 2. Retention, Succession & Workforce Stability

The Tasmanian wine sector’s maturity depends on maintaining a stable core workforce supported by effective succession planning. The next five years should see a deliberate focus on retaining mid-career professionals, nurturing emerging leaders, and facilitating smooth transitions as experienced practitioners retire.

Success in this area will mean fewer unfilled vacancies in key roles and a stronger internal pipeline of trained supervisors, vineyard managers, and winemakers ready to step up as opportunities arise.

*Indicators could include:*

- Improved retention rates across permanent positions, particularly in vineyard management and production.
- An established mentoring and succession framework connecting experienced leaders with early-career professionals.
- Increased participation of diversity and specifically, younger workers in leadership and technical roles.
- Recognition of career longevity within the sector, for example through industry awards, leadership showcases, or national benchmarking.

Workforce stability will also be reflected in the continued vibrancy of Tasmania’s regional wine communities. The success of the workforce will not just be measured in numbers but in the preservation of local expertise, culture, and the intergenerational transfer of knowledge that defines Tasmanian winemaking.

### 3. Seasonal Workforce Resilience

A sustainable workforce model must accommodate the seasonal and cyclical nature of vineyard and winery work. By 2030, Tasmania’s industry should have developed a coordinated and reliable seasonal workforce system that balances flexibility with fairness, ensuring that both employers and employees can plan with confidence.

The next five years should focus on reducing reliance on last-minute labour sourcing and developing longer-term relationships with seasonal workers. This includes strengthening connections with the Working Holiday Maker program, domestic labour mobility schemes, and local job hubs.

*Indicators of success might include:*

- Reduced seasonal labour shortages, particularly during pruning and vintage.
- Increased proportion of returning seasonal workers, reflecting positive employment experiences.
- Policy recognition for cellar door and winery work within visa and regional employment programs.
- Improved regional collaboration, with shared labour pools or regional workforce coordination platforms reducing duplication and inefficiency.

## MEASURING SUCCESS – THE NEXT FIVE YEARS

By developing a more stable seasonal workforce structure, the industry can improve productivity, quality assurance, and safety outcomes while enhancing Tasmania’s reputation as a fair and desirable place to work.

### 4. Accessible & Responsive Training Ecosystem

Training remains one of the strongest levers for long-term workforce success. Over the next five years, Wine Tasmania’s leadership – in partnership with Skills Tasmania, TasTAFE, VXT, and private RTOs – will be central to creating a training system that is accessible, affordable, and aligned with industry need.

Success will be reflected in the delivery of courses that are timely, locally available, and designed around the seasonal rhythms of the wine industry. The development of a digital Workforce Hub would further improve access to training calendars, job listings, and resources.

*Indicators could include:*

- Expansion of regional course delivery, with the four key regions offering regular practical training.
- Uptake of micro-credentials and short courses, providing faster and more relevant skill-building.

- Positive employer feedback on course quality and flexibility.
- Ongoing engagement between Wine Tasmania and training providers to co-design curriculum and delivery models.

Ultimately, a strong training ecosystem will help ensure that learning becomes an integral, continuous part of working in the Tasmanian wine industry – rather than an activity undertaken only in times of shortage.

### 5. Industry Attractiveness and Reputation as an Employer of Choice

The strength of the Tasmanian wine brand provides an exceptional foundation for workforce attraction. By 2030, the goal is for Tasmania to be widely recognised as a destination of choice for skilled workers, both nationally and internationally. Success will mean that people see working in Tasmanian wine as not only a job but a career pathway that combines lifestyle, community, and professional pride.

The industry’s attractiveness will depend on the alignment of its values – sustainability, quality, and integrity – with the aspirations of modern workers who seek purpose-driven employment

**MEASURING SUCCESS – THE NEXT FIVE YEARS**

**5. Industry Attractiveness & Reputation as an Employer of Choice** {continued}

*Indicators might include:*

- Positive trends in employment interest and application rates for key roles.
- Increased engagement with career campaigns and storytelling initiatives highlighting Tasmanian wine as a place to build a future.
- Inclusion of Tasmanian wine careers in vocational education pathways through linkages with agricultural, tourism and hospitality promotions.
- Media and social visibility of the sector’s role in regional prosperity and environmental stewardship.

Reputation as an employer of choice will also be reflected in retention metrics, people stay where they feel proud, supported, and connected.



**6. Systemic & Structural Change**

While the wine industry can lead in many areas, success will also depend on progress in addressing broader, structural issues that sit beyond the direct control of producers, such as housing, transport, visa and industrial relations policy. Over the next five years, Wine Tasmania will continue to collaborate with government, tourism, and agriculture partners and other industries with shared needs, to advocate for solutions that improve regional workforce conditions.

*Indicators of success might include:*

- Policy recognition of the wine industry’s specific workforce needs in state and federal programs.
- Partnerships and/or support for government to pilot initiatives or co-investment models addressing housing and/or regional transport.
- Evidence of improved coordination across government portfolios on workforce planning and regional infrastructure.
- Regular inclusion of the wine sector in state workforce and skills strategies, reinforcing its strategic significance.

While progress in these areas may be tied to the lead work of other industries and government, success will lie in establishing the partnerships and advocacy platforms that give the industry a clear, consistent voice in policy development.

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## MEASURING SUCCESS – THE NEXT FIVE YEARS

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### *7. Culture, Collaboration & Continuous Improvement*

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The final measure of success is cultural. A strong workforce system depends not only on policies and programs but on the shared commitment of industry participants to learn, adapt, and support one another. By 2030, the Tasmanian wine industry should be recognised nationally for its collaborative approach to workforce development, one where producers of all sizes share knowledge, resources, and leadership.

This cultural maturity will build on the strong existing foundations and be evident in how the industry talks about its people, shifting from “labour” to “talent,” from “seasonal workers” to “industry contributors.” It will also be reflected in

the willingness of businesses to continue to participate in collective initiatives, contribute data to workforce monitoring, and celebrate excellence across all roles.

*Success will be indicated through:*

- Regular evaluation and transparent reporting on workforce outcomes and challenges.
- Strong participation in workforce advisory discussions, ensuring industry ownership of direction and decisions.
- Ongoing collaboration across regions, with peer learning and shared problem-solving embedded in practice.
- Sustained commitment to diversity, inclusion, and wellbeing, ensuring that the workforce reflects and supports the communities in which it operates.



### WINE TASMANIA AREAS OF FOCUS

The following priority areas set out the practical actions required to strengthen Tasmania’s wine workforce over the next five years. They translate the insights from industry consultation and survey findings into a targeted program of initiatives designed to lift skills, attract and retain workers, and build the capability and resilience of businesses across all regions. These initiatives recognise that the sector’s workforce challenges are interconnected, shaped by access to training, leadership capability, career visibility, regional constraints, and policy settings that influence labour mobility.

The complete Implementation Table outlining all initiatives, responsibilities, and measures of success is included as **Attachment A** of this report. The summary below highlights the core focus areas that will guide Wine Tasmania’s leadership, partnerships and advocacy efforts as the workforce priority areas are implemented.

#### EXPAND/TARGET ACCESS TO PRACTICAL, ACCREDITED TRAINING

- Work with training providers and industry groups to deliver targeted training and accreditation, short courses, micro-credentials and certifications (e.g., pruning, forklift, RSA) in regional locations, reducing barriers related to cost and travel.

- Develop the Tassie Wine Academy: a new program to provide engaging information and education on Tasmanian wine, empowering customer-facing personnel (hospitality, trade, cellar door) to promote and preference Tassie wine.
- Present regular targeted workshops for wine businesses across viticulture, winemaking, marketing, exporting, wine tourism, benchmark tastings and more.

#### SUPPORT LEADERSHIP & SUPERVISORY SKILLS DEVELOPMENT

- Demonstrate leadership capabilities and case studies across the Tasmanian wine community, leverage leadership training graduates to promote and attract workers.
- Provide accessible training in leadership and workplace culture to improve staff retention and lift industry standards.
- Facilitate scholarship opportunities and support for young wine professionals to travel and attend conferences, workshops and other events.

#### FACILITATE COLLECTIVE APPROACHES FOR SMALL BUSINESSES

- Present regular regional workshops and benchmark tastings to facilitate local interaction and knowledge sharing.
- Provide online platform for Tasmanian wine businesses to share information and facilitate collaboration.

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## WINE TASMANIA AREAS OF FOCUS

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### PROMOTE THE INDUSTRY AS A CAREER OF CHOICE

- Partner with institutions on relevant cool climate wine research, supporting knowledge-sharing among PhD students, researchers and skilled workers.
- Participate with complementary sectors, local and national, on campaigns showcasing diverse opportunities and career pathways in agriculture/viticulture, hospitality/cellar door/wine tourism.

### PARTNER & ADVOCATE FOR MULTI-SECTOR & REGIONAL SOLUTIONS

- Engage with state and federal governments to explore allowing cellar door/hospitality roles and winery/cellar roles in remote wine regions to qualify for working holiday visa extensions and to fix the Tasmanian postcode anomaly for tourism and hospitality work to include remote east coast towns

with postcode 7190, adjacent to eligible postcode 7215 – an isolated part of Tasmania which relies on tourism and struggles to attract workers.

- Engage with federal government to align conditions for (wine grape) vineyard roles with (table grape) vineyard roles under the Horticulture Award. Specifically, adjust high penalty rates and reduce minimum hours from 4 hours to 2.5 hours for casual staff and allow permanent workers to work ordinary hours by agreement Monday to Saturday without penalty to ensure harvesting can be undertaken when needed to secure optimum quality and ripeness.
- With other industry groups, collaborate with state and local governments to identify opportunities for seasonal worker accommodation, affordable housing developments, and transport initiatives that support regional wine businesses.



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## **SUMMARY: MEASURING WHAT MATTERS**

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Over the next five years, success in workforce development will not be defined by the absence of challenge, but by the industry’s collective ability to anticipate, adapt, and grow. The measures of progress will be both tangible: improved training participation, retention, and recruitment outcomes, and intangible, reflected in confidence, pride, and shared purpose.

By 2030, Tasmania’s wine workforce should exemplify what a mature, high-value regional industry looks like: one that invests in its people with the same care it invests in its vines; one that plans for the long term; and one that knows that excellence is sustained not by scale, but by the people who choose to build their careers within it.

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## **CONCLUSION**

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*Tasmania’s wine sector embodies excellence, collaboration, and community. Sustaining that legacy requires a long-term investment in people – the growers, makers, hosts, and innovators who give Tasmanian wine its global standing. The next five years present both challenge and opportunity. Through partnership, leadership, and a shared vision for the future, the industry can strengthen its workforce, secure its reputation, and ensure that Tasmanian wine continues to thrive as both a world-class product and a world-class place to work.*

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Images courtesy of Adam Gibson, Tourism Tasmania,  
Wine Australia & Wine Tasmania.

## Attachment A: Implementation Overview

## Tasmanian Wine Industry Workforce Development Strategy – Implementation Overview

This table outlines the implementation approach for Wine Tasmania’s Workforce Development Strategy (2025–2030), demonstrating where Wine Tasmania will lead, partner, or influence activity across key initiatives. It is designed to identify scope, collaboration, and measurable outcomes. It also identifies longer term and broader initiatives to be explored, which are not specific to the wine industry and outside Wine Tasmania’s direct scope.

### 2025-2030 Activities

Initiative / Focus Area	Why (Purpose)	Who / How	Measures of Success	Lead/Partner/Influence
<b>Tassie Wine Academy</b>	Educate customer-facing workers, strengthen Tas wine preference, create wine trade ambassadors	WT + producers + hospitality	Academy launched; participation metrics	Lead
<b>Technical &amp; Commercial Workshop Series</b>	Build capability in viticulture, winemaking, export, marketing, tourism	WT + industry specialists	Regular workshops; strong attendance	Lead
<b>Online Collaboration Platform</b>	Enable producer collaboration, labour pooling, knowledge exchange	WT + digital platform dev.	Active engagement; collaborative projects	Lead
<b>Small Business Collaboration &amp; Resource Sharing</b>	Increase capability of small producers through shared tools and platforms	WT + producers	Increased collaboration; shared resources	Lead

<b>Initiative / Focus Area</b>	<b>Why (Purpose)</b>	<b>Who / How</b>	<b>Measures of Success</b>	<b>Lead/Partner/Influence</b>
<b>Leadership &amp; Mentoring</b>	Leadership capability	WT + Tas Leaders	Participation & diversity improvement	Lead/Partner
<b>Scholarships &amp; Early-Career PD</b>	Support young professionals to access national/international learning	WT + national/other industry + UTAS + other tertiary partners	Scholarship uptake; career progression	Lead/Partner
<b>Benchmark Tastings Program</b>	Structured peer learning & quality benchmarking	WT + producers	Regular tastings; improved market & technical knowledge	Lead
<b>Cool Climate Wine Research Partnerships</b>	Strengthen research links; knowledge exchange	WT + UTAS + research bodies	Joint outputs; workforce capability uplift	Lead/Partner
<b>Training Delivery Partnerships</b>	Regional job-ready training	WT + TasTAFE + RTOs	Expanded delivery; enrolments up	Partner
<b>Training Concierge</b>	Simplify training access	WT + TasTAFE + VXT	High usage; positive feedback	Partner/Influence
<b>Visa &amp; Policy Advocacy</b>	Improve visa settings, correct postcode anomalies; WHM eligibility for cellar door roles, align conditions with the Horticulture Award	WT + gov + industry	Policy shifts considered	Influence

## Tasmanian Wine Industry Workforce Development Strategy – Additional Considerations

This table identifies longer term and broader initiatives to be explored, which are not specific to the wine industry and outside Wine Tasmania’s direct scope. They are presented as part of this discussion paper for further review with government, other sectors and training providers.

<b>Initiative / Focus Area</b>	<b>Why (Purpose)</b>	<b>Who / How</b>	<b>Measures of Success</b>	<b>Lead/Partner/Influence</b>
<b>Workplace Culture &amp; Supervisory Training</b>	Lift retention & standards through leadership culture training	WT + HR/leadership partners	Improved retention; better workplace culture	Lead/Partner
<b>Online Workforce Hub</b>	Centralise training/jobs across agriculture/tourism	WT + partners + digital/training orgs	Hub active; engagement high	Partner/Influence
<b>Cross-Sector Career Partnerships</b>	Joint agriculture/tourism/hospitality campaigns, visibility of careers	WT + tourism + hospitality + ag sectors	Visibility of wine careers increases	Partner/Influence
<b>Seasonal Worker Accommodation Solutions</b>	Joint approaches to seasonal housing availability	WT + councils + gov + industry	Pilot accommodation solutions	Influence
<b>Regional Plans/Housing/Transport Advocacy</b>	Regional solutions, address constraints	WT + gov + councils	Joint submissions; pilots	Influence

# Attachment B: Workforce Strategy Survey Analysis



Wine Tasmania

Workforce Strategy Survey Analysis – July 2025

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## Respondent Overview

A total of 44 responses were received from Tasmanian wine sector businesses, representing almost half of 2025 wine production (47%) and reflecting strong engagement across the industry. Participation remained high through the early sections of the survey but declined slightly on later, more detailed questions (down to ~24–29 respondents on training- and barrier-related questions). This drop-off may indicate survey fatigue or that some questions were less relevant to certain businesses.

Key characteristics of respondents include:

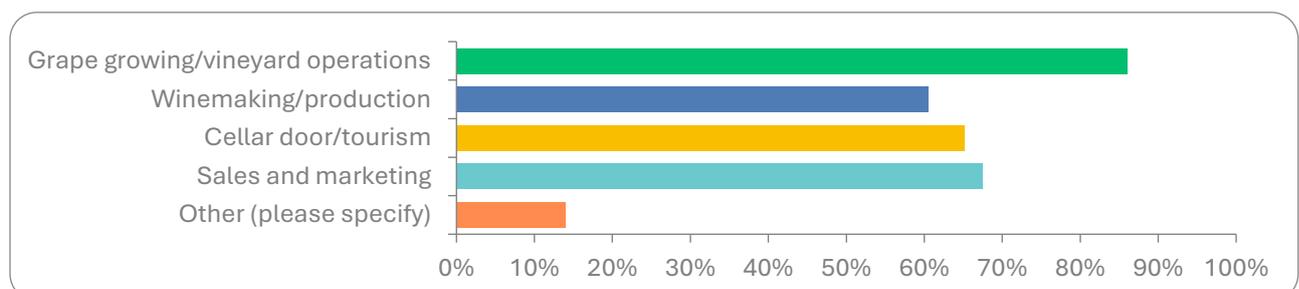
- Diverse business types: Representing vineyards, wineries, cellar doors, contract services, and vertically integrated operations.
- Longevity: The cohort included both well-established operations and newer entrants, suggesting a mix of experienced businesses facing succession pressures and newer businesses requiring foundational workforce support.
- Geographic spread: Businesses operate across Tasmania's key wine growing areas, including in the north (Tamar Valley, Pipers River), East Coast and Southern Tasmania (Coal River Valley, Derwent Valley and Huon/Channel), highlighting the need (opportunity?) for regionally tailored workforce interventions.

## Respondent Wine Sector Involvement

All respondents indicated their businesses are involved in multiple parts of the wine sector, with many selecting more than one category. This demonstrates:

- Significant vertical integration in the industry (e.g., grape growing and winemaking and sales).
- A need for **multi-skilled workers** capable of adapting across vineyard, production, and hospitality roles.

**Consideration:** A workforce strategy could consider flexibility and cross-training, ensuring staff can move between roles as seasonal demands shift.

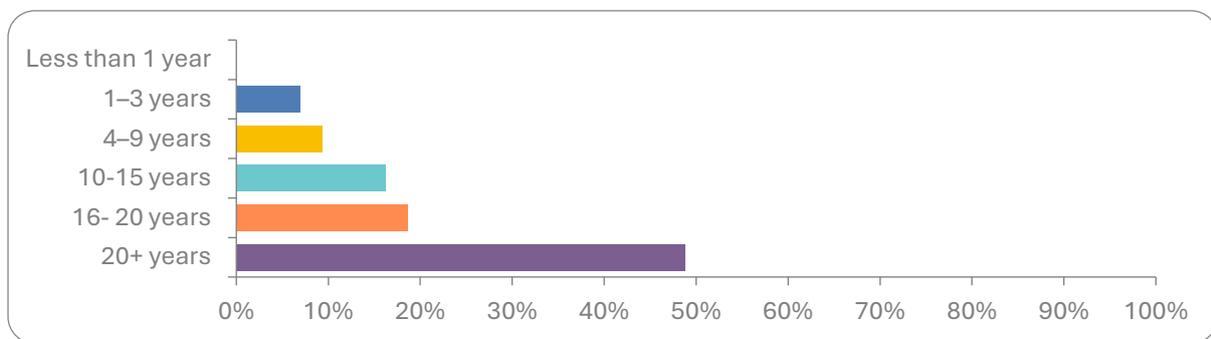


## Years of Operation

Responses showed a range of business maturity:

- The majority of businesses reported 20+ operating years, highlighting a depth of industry experience but also potential issues with an ageing workforce and/or succession planning.
- Other respondents were in the early years of establishment, reflecting Tasmania's growing reputation as a cool-climate wine region and the influx of new investment.

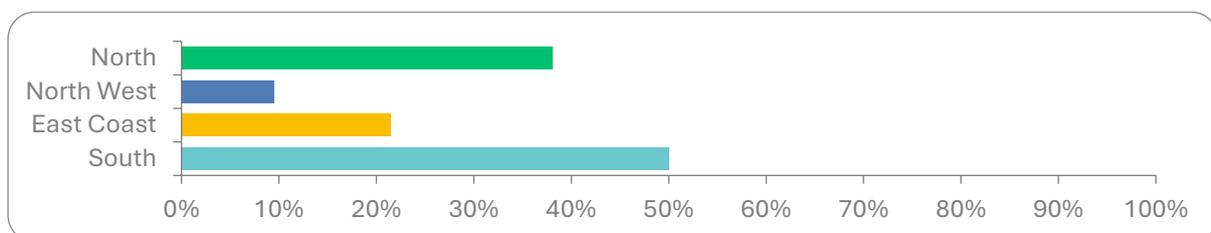
**Consideration:** Strategies will need to support both **succession planning** for established businesses and **foundational skill-building** for newer operators.



## Primary Operating Areas

- North and South were among the most represented, but engagement extended statewide.
- This geographic spread underscores varied regional challenges — e.g., transport for staff, housing availability, training access — which must be addressed in workforce planning.

**Considerations:** A need for some workforce interventions that are **region-specific**, not one-size-fits-all.



## Workforce Characteristics

The survey responses represented a broad cross-section of the sector, with involvement in vineyard operations, winemaking, cellar door sales, export, contract services, and other integrated activities.

The findings highlight that the industry's workforce is characterised by its dual reliance on permanent skilled staff and seasonal or casual workers, particularly during peak periods such as vintage and harvest.

Many businesses reported employing multi-skilled workers capable of operating across various parts of their business — from viticulture and cellar operations to hospitality and sales — reflecting the vertically integrated nature of much of the sector.

Common themes emerged regarding workforce conditions, with businesses identifying challenges in recruiting and retaining staff, filling specialised technical roles, and managing workforce pressures shaped by regional location, housing availability, and competition from other industries.

The following section provides a detailed breakdown of the survey findings regarding the workforce characteristics - exploring employment types, skill needs, regional factors, and workforce trends shaping the future of Tasmania's wine industry.

## Current and Future Workforce Expectations



The survey insights regarding the types of workers currently employed, and the expected change over the next 5 years, paints a picture of an industry that relies heavily on both flexible, short-term workers and a stable core of permanent staff — and one that anticipates growth, especially in key customer-facing and marketing roles.

Most businesses reported that they currently rely on **seasonal and casual workers** to help with busy periods, such as harvest times. Many businesses expect their need for these seasonal workers to increase in the years ahead. This highlights a continuing challenge: finding and keeping enough short-term staff during peak times, especially when competition for workers from other industries like tourism or agriculture is high.

At the same time, around half of businesses employ **permanent staff** who handle ongoing tasks like vineyard care, production, and business operations. Fewer businesses expect to grow these permanent roles significantly, suggesting many feel their current staffing levels in these core areas are sufficient — or that growth in permanent positions is harder to plan for given uncertainty in the broader economy or challenges attracting skilled people.

One area where more businesses see potential growth is in **supervisory and skilled roles**, such as team leaders for vineyard or production work. Several respondents noted they would like to expand these positions, which reflects a need for people with the expertise and leadership skills to support both business growth and knowledge transfer from experienced staff nearing retirement.

Notably, there is strong interest in increasing staff in **customer-facing roles**, particularly at cellar doors and in **sales and marketing** positions. Many businesses see these areas as essential to reaching new customers, expanding their brands, and improving profitability — and expect to need more people with skills in communication, marketing, and hospitality.

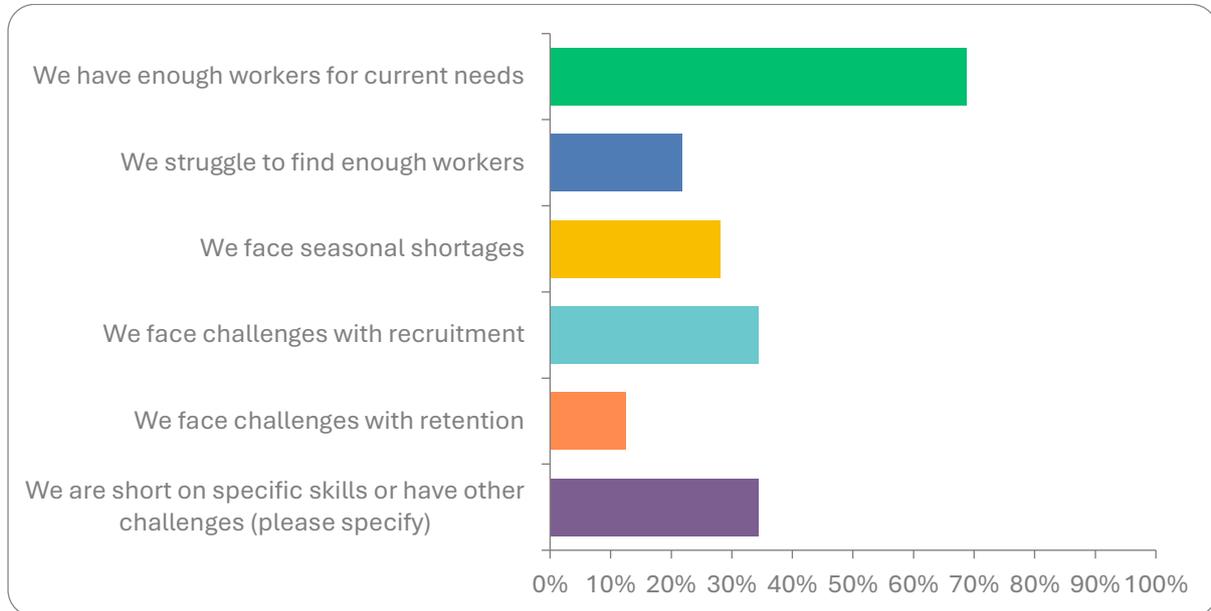
Very few businesses reported plans to reduce staffing in any category. This generally positive outlook suggests confidence in the future of the Tasmanian wine industry and points to opportunities for well-targeted workforce strategies. However, it also underscores the challenges ahead in attracting and retaining both seasonal and permanent staff — especially in regional areas with housing shortages or limited transport options.

In summary, businesses expect:

- Continued and possibly growing reliance on seasonal workers.
- Modest increases in skilled supervisory roles.
- Stronger growth in customer service and marketing positions.
- Stability — but not significant expansion — in core production roles.

These expectations highlight the need for workforce development efforts that make the industry more attractive to potential workers, support businesses to upskill their teams, and address barriers like housing and training access so employers can meet future demand.

## Current Conditions



Survey responses to the question “*For your business, how would you describe current workforce conditions?*” reveal a mixed picture across Tasmanian wine businesses, highlighting both strengths and key areas for workforce development.

A majority of respondents - nearly 70%, indicated they currently have enough workers for their needs, suggesting that many businesses feel stable or well-resourced at the moment. This is a positive sign for short-term workforce adequacy in parts of the industry.

However, the remaining responses point to significant and widespread challenges:

- Recruitment difficulties were reported by approximately 40% of respondents, indicating many businesses are struggling to find suitable workers when positions become available.
- Seasonal shortages were identified by around 30% of businesses, reflecting the ongoing difficulty in securing reliable staff during critical periods such as vintage or pruning.
- Around 20% of businesses said they struggle to find enough workers overall, beyond just seasonal peaks.
- Retention challenges were flagged by roughly 10% of respondents, showing that while fewer businesses face high staff turnover, it is a real issue for some — particularly in competitive regional labour markets.
- Over 40% reported being short on specific skills or experiencing other workforce challenges, highlighting needs beyond basic staffing numbers,

such as gaps in technical expertise, regulatory knowledge, or supervisory capacity.

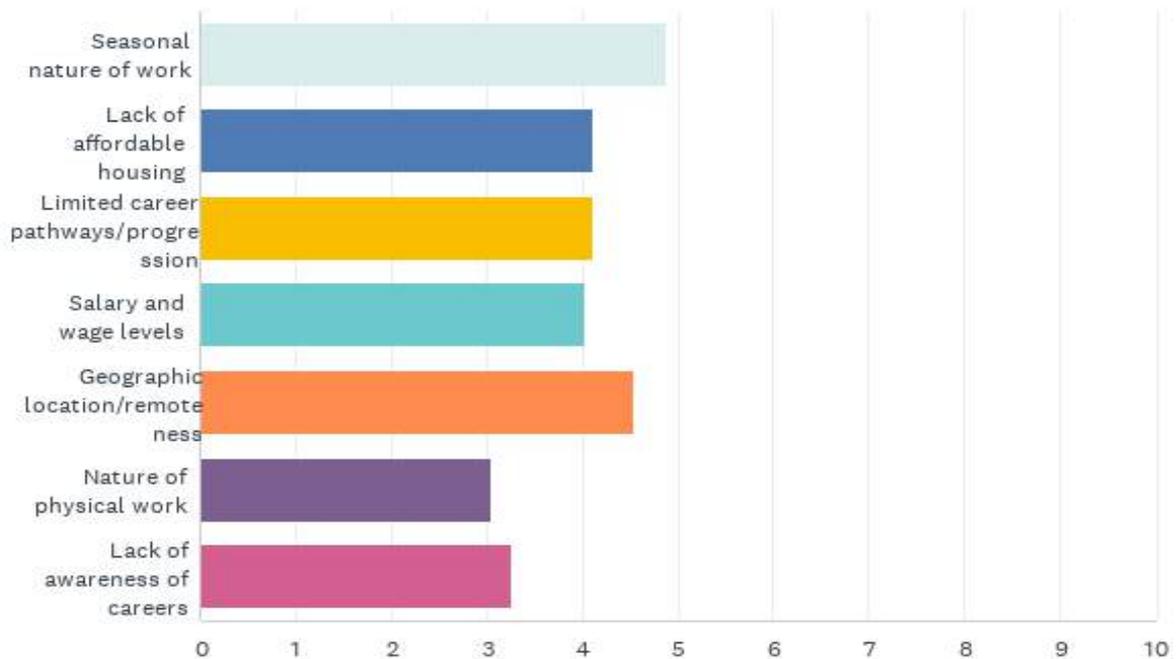
**Key takeaways:**

- Even though many businesses feel confident about their current workforce, a large proportion are already facing recruitment and skill shortages, particularly at peak times or for specialised roles.
- Seasonal labour remains a critical pressure point, with staffing shortages at certain times of year posing risks to productivity and business continuity.
- The challenges identified by respondents go beyond simply finding workers — many businesses need employees with the right skills and experience to meet industry standards and support growth.

**Considerations for the workforce strategy:**

- Support is needed to make it easier for businesses to recruit and train workers with the necessary skills.
- Programs addressing seasonal workforce shortages, including access to local or migrant labour, will be important for sustaining productivity.
- Initiatives to improve staff retention, such as clearer career pathways, ensuring competitive employment conditions, and/or supportive work environments, could help reduce turnover and improve workforce stability.

## Challenges impacting on attraction and retention



Survey responses reveal that Tasmanian wine businesses face multiple, interconnected challenges when it comes to attracting and keeping workers. These barriers reflect both workforce-specific and broader social factors, underlining the complexity of creating a sustainable and appealing employment environment in the wine sector.

The **seasonal nature of work** emerged as the top-ranked barrier, with an average score of 4.88 out of 7. Many respondents highlighted that the short-term, cyclical patterns of vineyard and production work discourage potential employees seeking year-round security and income stability.

**Geographic location and remoteness** scored a close second (4.54), with businesses identifying the difficulty of attracting workers to regional areas, where limited transport options, long travel times, or isolation can make jobs less appealing — especially for people considering relocation or commuting.

**Lack of affordable housing** (4.12) was also a significant barrier. Respondents pointed out that in popular wine regions, housing shortages and high rental costs make it difficult for workers — particularly seasonal or lower-paid staff — to find suitable accommodation.

Other key barriers included:

- **Limited career pathways or progression opportunities** (4.12), reflecting concerns that without clear advancement prospects, the industry struggles to attract and retain workers seeking longer-term careers.
- **Salary and wage levels** (4.04), with businesses acknowledging that wine industry wages often lag behind other sectors competing for the same workers, such as construction, tourism, or agriculture.
- **Lack of awareness of careers in wine** (3.27), showing that many potential workers simply don't know about the range of roles or career possibilities in the industry.
- **Nature of physical work** (3.04), highlighting that the demanding, outdoor, and sometimes repetitive nature of vineyard or cellar work can deter candidates.

The detailed table breakdown confirms these patterns, showing how respondents consistently ranked seasonal work, geographic isolation, and housing as the most pressing obstacles.

#### **Key takeaways:**

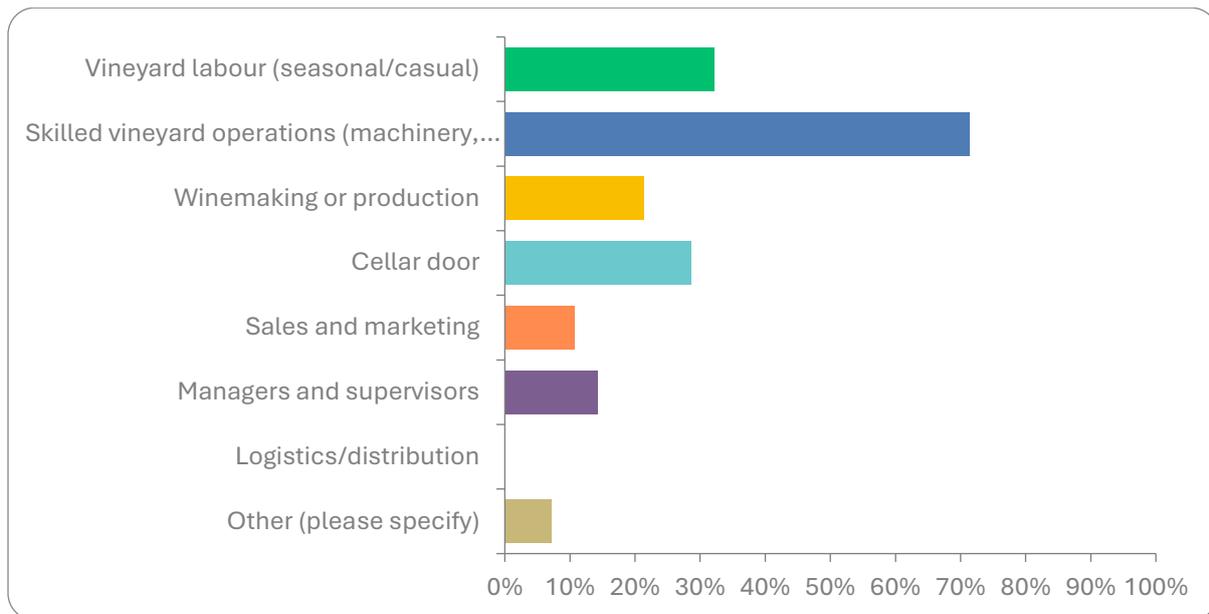
- Seasonal and insecure work structures are major deterrents for many potential employees, creating a need for more permanent or year-round roles where possible.
- Regional housing and transport issues are fundamental barriers outside the control of individual businesses but crucial to workforce planning for businesses located outside of urban centres.
- Increasing awareness of wine industry careers and creating clear pathways for progression could make the sector more attractive, especially to younger workers or career changers.
- Competitive wages and supportive working conditions will be important in retaining skilled staff and competing with other industries.

#### **Considerations for the workforce strategy:**

- Collaborative approaches with government and regional partners to address immigration, housing and transport infrastructure challenges.
- Workforce programs focused on showcasing the wine industry as a viable, rewarding career path.
- Exploring ways to increase job security, such as offering year-round contracts combining vineyard, cellar, and hospitality work.
- Reviewing wage structures and employment conditions to stay competitive in a tight labour market.

## Training, Education and Skill Needs

### Skill Needs



Survey responses to the question on the hardest skills to find in workers reveal critical gaps across a range of roles, which have significant implications for the future of the Tasmanian wine workforce.

The most frequently reported challenge was in **skilled vineyard operations**, with nearly 80% of respondents identifying difficulty finding workers who have the technical expertise needed for tasks such as operating machinery, pruning, pest management, and canopy work. This result highlights a pressing need for practical training pathways and better access to hands-on learning in viticulture.

**Seasonal and casual vineyard labour** was the next most common area of concern, with around 35% of businesses struggling to find enough workers to fill these short-term roles. This reinforces earlier findings about challenges in securing seasonal staff during busy periods.

Skills shortages were also identified in other key areas:

- **Cellar door roles** (approximately 30% of respondents), reflecting the difficulty of finding staff with strong hospitality and customer service skills essential for cellar door sales and tourism experiences.

- **Winemaking and production** (about 20%), showing that businesses face barriers sourcing employees with the technical skills required for wine production and cellar work.
- **Sales and marketing**, along with **managers and supervisors**, were each cited by around 10–15% of respondents, pointing to difficulties finding staff with commercial or leadership skills needed to grow and sustain businesses.
- A small number of respondents highlighted **logistics and distribution** or specified other specialised roles in the “Other” category.

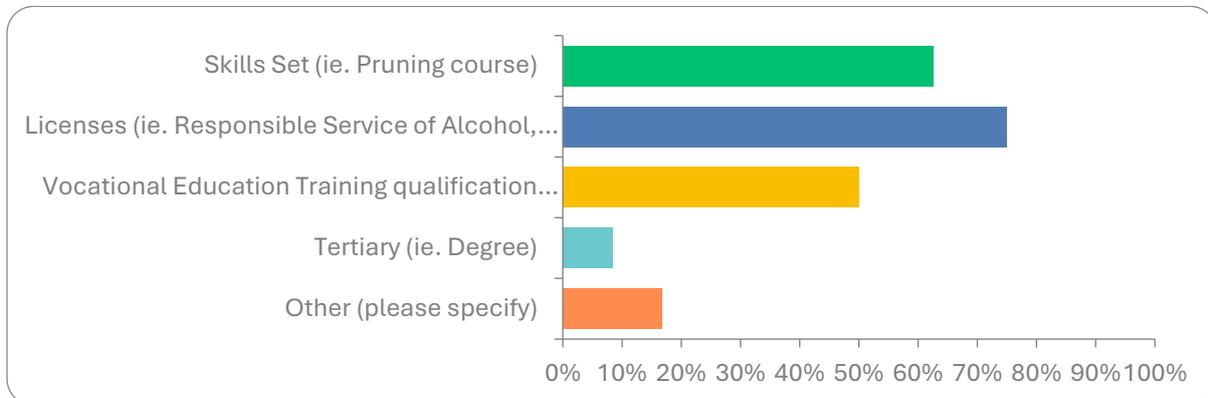
#### **Key takeaways:**

- The shortage of workers with technical vineyard skills is by far the most significant challenge, underlining the urgent need for targeted training, mentoring, and pathways for people to gain practical experience.
- Difficulties finding seasonal vineyard workers and skilled cellar door staff show that workforce strategies must also consider making wine industry jobs more attractive and accessible, including addressing regional barriers like transport or housing.
- Shortages in commercial and leadership roles, although affecting fewer businesses, can limit growth opportunities and the ability to adapt to market changes.

#### **Considerations for the workforce strategy:**

- Investment in practical, regionally accessible training programs focused on technical vineyard operations.
- Initiatives to support recruitment and retention of seasonal and customer-facing staff, such as highlighting wine tourism as a vibrant career option.
- Opportunities to build skills in sales, marketing, and management to strengthen the long-term capacity and competitiveness of the industry.

## Training Requirements



Survey responses on expected training requirements over the next five years show a strong appetite among Tasmanian wine businesses for practical, hands-on training and certification opportunities that build the skills needed to sustain and grow the industry.

The most frequently identified need was for specific skill sets, such as pruning courses, with around 65% of respondents indicating this as a priority. This highlights a clear demand for short, focused training options that give workers essential, job-ready skills to perform technical tasks in vineyards and production.

Approximately 70% of respondents identified a need for licenses, including qualifications such as Responsible Service of Alcohol (RSA) for cellar door staff, or forklift licenses for warehouse and production operations. This finding reflects the wine industry's inter-related links between workforce and the regulatory environment, where compliance is essential for both safety and legal operations.

More than half of businesses indicated they will require Vocational Education and Training (VET) qualifications, such as Certificates II or III, over the next five years. This suggests strong interest in structured training pathways that offer recognised credentials, support career progression, and build workforce capability in technical, sales, or supervisory roles.

A smaller proportion of respondents (about 10%) reported needing staff with tertiary qualifications (e.g., degrees). This indicates that while degrees are important for some roles, most immediate training needs are practical and vocational rather than university-based.

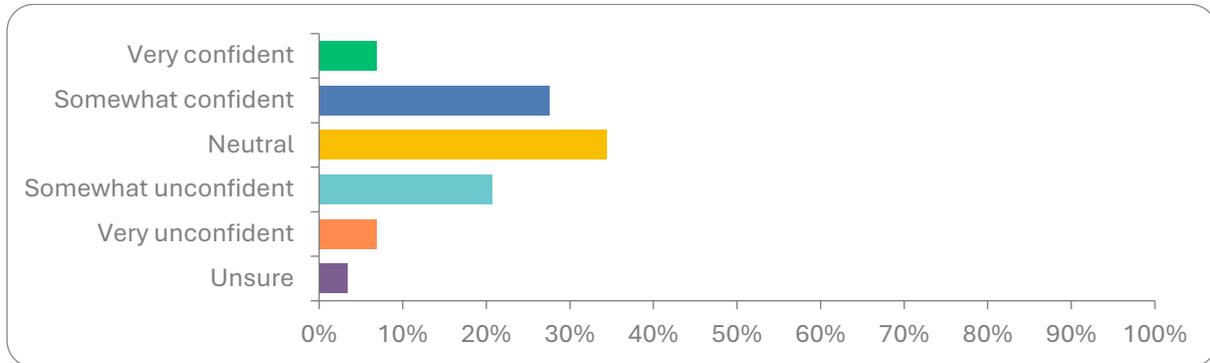
### **Key takeaways:**

- There is clear demand for accessible, practical training programs — especially short courses, certificates, and licenses — tailored to the specific needs of the wine industry.
- Compliance-focused training (licenses) is a major priority, reflecting businesses' concerns about meeting safety and legal requirements.
- Tertiary education is less frequently required, suggesting that entry-level and mid-level workforce needs can largely be met through targeted vocational and skills-based training.

**Considerations for the workforce strategy:**

- Workforce development initiatives should prioritise expanding local access to practical, accredited training, including pruning, machinery operation, hospitality compliance, and supervisory skills.
- Training providers could work closely with industry to deliver flexible programs that allow staff to gain skills without needing to leave the region or be away from work for extended periods.
- Supporting businesses to identify and plan for emerging training needs — such as digital marketing or environmental management — will help future-proof the workforce.

## Confidence in Training and Education Options



Survey responses reveal mixed feelings among Tasmanian wine businesses about how well existing training and education offerings meet industry needs. While there is some confidence, the majority of responses lean towards uncertainty or doubt, suggesting opportunities to improve how training is designed and delivered.

Only a small proportion of respondents — less than 10% — reported feeling very confident that existing training options are fit for purpose. Around one-third said they are somewhat confident, indicating that while some see value in current programs, confidence is generally cautious.

The largest group of respondents — approximately 35% — selected neutral, suggesting they neither agree nor disagree that training options currently meet industry needs. This neutrality may reflect uncertainty about the relevance of available programs, lack of exposure to training opportunities, or gaps between training content and practical, on-the-ground requirements.

Meanwhile, roughly 20% of respondents felt somewhat unconfident, and about 10% reported being very unconfident, indicating significant concerns about the adequacy or accessibility of existing education and training options.

A small number of respondents were unsure, highlighting that some businesses may not have enough information about current training offerings to form an opinion.

### **Key takeaways:**

- Overall, confidence in current training options is low to moderate, with most respondents either neutral or expressing some level of doubt about whether existing programs meet workforce needs.
- The results suggest a disconnect between what is currently on offer and what businesses believe is necessary to build and sustain a skilled wine industry workforce.

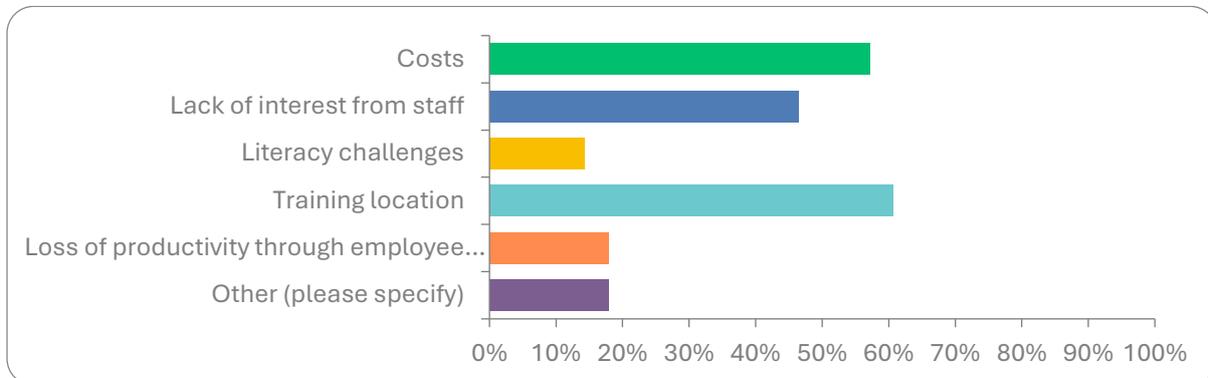


- Neutral and negative responses point to opportunities to improve industry engagement in course design, enhance the practical relevance of training, and expand access, especially in regional areas.

**Considerations for the workforce strategy:**

- Strengthening collaboration between training providers and the wine industry to ensure courses align with real-world business needs.
- Improving communication and awareness of available training options so businesses and workers know what support exists.
- Exploring flexible delivery models — including online or regionally delivered programs — to increase participation and relevance for businesses operating in remote wine regions.

## Training Barriers



Survey responses highlight several significant barriers that prevent Tasmanian wine businesses and their employees from participating in training opportunities, underlining the need for targeted interventions to make skills development more accessible and practical.

The most commonly cited barrier was **cost**, with over half of respondents reporting that training expenses are prohibitive for their business or staff. This indicates that affordability is a major obstacle to workforce upskilling, particularly for small or family-run operations that lack discretionary budgets for staff development.

**Training location** emerged as another key barrier, identified by nearly half of respondents. This reflects the challenge of accessing training in regional or remote wine-growing areas, where travel to courses can be time-consuming and expensive for both businesses and workers.

A significant number of businesses also identified **lack of interest from staff** as a barrier, suggesting a need to better engage employees by demonstrating the value of training and providing programs that are relevant, flexible, and motivating.

Other reported barriers included:

- **Loss of productivity through employee absence for training**, where taking staff off regular duties disrupts operations in small teams.
- **Literacy challenges**, affecting a smaller proportion of businesses but nonetheless representing a real barrier for some workers who may struggle with traditional training formats.
- A minority of respondents cited other barriers, which may include timing of courses, training content not matching business needs, or issues with course availability.

**Key takeaways:**

- Financial and logistical challenges are the most significant barriers to training participation, with cost and training location issues affecting a majority of respondents.
- Engagement strategies should address staff motivation and perceptions of training value, particularly where lack of interest is a barrier.
- Flexible, regionally delivered, or online training solutions could help businesses overcome productivity losses and access challenges.
- Addressing literacy and learning needs through supportive training design will make opportunities more inclusive.

**Considerations for the workforce strategy:**

- Consider subsidised or low-cost training options for small businesses.
- Invest in local or on-site training delivery models to reduce travel burdens.
- Develop programs that clearly connect training with tangible benefits for workers and businesses to boost engagement.
- Explore foundational skills programs for workers facing literacy challenges.

## Industry Reflections: Ideas and Priorities Shared by Wine Businesses

Through open-ended comments, respondents offered rich, on-the-ground perspectives about what would help them attract, retain, and develop their workforce. These insights reveal shared challenges, practical suggestions, and important context for workforce strategy development:

### Accommodation and Housing

A clear and repeated theme was the **lack of affordable, accessible housing**, especially in regional and remote wine areas. Businesses struggle to attract both permanent and seasonal workers when there are limited options for accommodation. Some suggested on-site or employer-provided housing but noted associated risks or practical challenges. Others highlighted the need for broader housing solutions and support for seasonal worker accommodation.

### Attracting and Retaining Workers

Many responses pointed to the **seasonal nature of wine work** as a key barrier, with businesses emphasising the difficulty of offering stable employment year-round. Comments highlighted that local workers often seek ongoing, permanent roles, while the industry's peaks and troughs require flexible staff. Businesses expressed a need for more reliable and affordable seasonal workers during pruning and harvest.

### Skills, Training, and Career Pathways

There was strong interest in **practical, short, industry-led training**, particularly for skills like pruning, machinery operation, and viticulture techniques. Respondents noted that shorter courses are more achievable for staff and businesses, balancing time, cost, and usefulness. Many highlighted the importance of clear **career pathways** to attract locals, particularly younger workers, and suggested more targeted outreach to schools and communities to raise awareness of opportunities in wine.

### Promoting the Industry and Raising Awareness

Several businesses stressed the need to **promote the wine industry as a viable career option**, especially among school leavers and those in lower socio-economic groups who may not currently see it as an option. Comments suggested building understanding of the industry's diversity — from vineyard work to cellar doors and logistics — and showcasing potential career growth.

### Practical Barriers and Solutions

- **Visa issues:** Respondents highlighted that cellar door and hospitality work in remote areas doesn't count towards visa extension programs for

backpackers, limiting access to a key workforce pool. Allowing this work to contribute to visa extensions was seen as a potential game-changer.

- **Penalty rates:** A few businesses noted that weekend penalty rates can prevent them from maximising good weather windows for harvest, affecting productivity and staff earning opportunities.
- **Leadership and management training:** There was a call for programs that build the capability of team leaders, supervisors, and managers, including dealing with performance issues and developing others.

### Other Reflections

- Some businesses mentioned challenges competing with larger vineyards for workers, noting smaller operations can be overlooked if they offer fewer days of work.
- A handful shared that while they personally haven't struggled with recruitment, they recognise broader industry challenges and see value in collective efforts to address them.
- A small number of respondents flagged concerns around **brand protection**, maintaining the value of Tasmanian wine, and ensuring decisions affecting the local industry are made within Tasmania rather than dictated by mainland states.

## Workforce Strategy Considerations and Recommendations

The insights gathered through this survey highlight both strengths and significant challenges facing Tasmania's wine workforce. Addressing these issues requires a coordinated, practical, and regionally responsive approach. The following considerations and recommendations are for discussion and to inform a workforce strategy that will build a sustainable, skilled, and engaged workforce capable of supporting the sector's ongoing growth.

### Key Strategy Considerations

1. **Seasonal Workforce Dependency**

The industry's reliance on casual and seasonal labour for vineyard and harvest work is fundamental but creates persistent vulnerabilities. Strategies should explore ways to improve reliability of seasonal staff and better integrate seasonal work into stable employment opportunities.

2. **Skill Shortages in Technical Roles**

Persistent gaps in vineyard-specific skills, cellar operations, and supervisory capacity highlight the need for practical, hands-on training that aligns closely with industry requirements.

3. **Training Access and Delivery**

Barriers such as high costs, limited availability of regionally delivered training, and time away from work require flexible training models — including online, modular, and on-site delivery — tailored to the realities of wine businesses.

4. **Perceptions and Industry Attractiveness**

Limited awareness of wine industry careers, especially among younger people and potential career changers, constrains the talent pipeline. Raising the profile of the sector as a rewarding, long-term career path will be key.

5. **Leadership Capability and Workplace Culture**

Building effective leadership and supportive workplace cultures will improve staff retention, reduce turnover, and make wine businesses more attractive to skilled workers.

6. **Visa and Policy Settings**

Policy barriers — including current restrictions on visa eligibility for cellar door and hospitality work in remote areas — limit access to an important labour source, especially for seasonal roles.