

Media Release

Ms Mary-Anne Thomas MP
Minister for Regional Development
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DRINK VICTORIAN: SHOWCASING OUR REGIONAL PRODUCERS

The Andrews Labor Government is backing Victorian drink producers across the state to showcase their produce and encourage people to try more locally produced beverages.

The Labor Government's *Drink Victorian* program went on tour this month, helping Victorians to discover drinks talent and local products in regional Victoria. The 'Regional Famils Program' allowed buyers and sommeliers to get a better understanding of the producers, their stories and the products our state has to offer.

Throughout May, more than 80 industry members toured eight drinks regions including Central Victoria, Geelong and Bellarine, Gippsland, Rutherglen and Beechworth, Yarra Valley, Otways, Grampians and Pyrenees; King and Alpine Valley and the Mornington Peninsula.

The events forged a stronger connection between regional producers and the markets they supply to as they showcased the diversity and range of Victorian beverages. More than 100 producers were involved including winemakers, brewers, distillers and non-alcoholic producers.

On Day One of the regional tour, Bellarine Peninsula producer and co-owner at Flying Brick Cider Co. Lyndsay Sharp and cider maker Nyal Condon opened their doors to host a lunch in their timber-clad Cider House with their 100% natural, craft cider on-tap.

Belinda Thomson is a chief winemaker and vigneron who took over her family's vineyard in 2014 and continues to make organic and modern wines. Her winery, Crawford River Wines was featured as part of the Grampians stop on the tour with a dinner at the Royal Mail Hotel.

Yarra Valley producer and founder of Banks Botanical in Healesville Brian Cohen welcomed industry with an intimate tour and tasting of their non-alcoholic spirit which uses botanicals sourced from the Australian bush.

The Drink Victorian pilot program initially targeted 100 hospitality and retail venues across metropolitan Melbourne but is now being showcased across regional Victoria. The program has now led regional visits, hosted Melbourne-based 'super tastings', delivered training and offered marketing support to encourage venues to include more Victorian-produced drinks on their menus.

The program has been funded by the Government through the Food to Market program which is a key initiative being rolled out as part of the transformative Agriculture Strategy. The initiative has also been backed by further funding from the *Victorian Budget 2022/23*. Click [here](#) for more information about the program.

Quote attributable to Minister for Regional Development and Agriculture Mary-Anne Thomas

"We're backing Drink Victorian to boost industry knowledge and create more market demand for our locally produced drinks, which will help to create jobs."

Quote attributable to Food + Drink Victoria CEO Anthea Loucas Boshia

"This program is part of Drink Victorian and offers an invaluable opportunity for key decision makers in the drinks industry – both buyers and sommeliers -to gain a better understanding of the breadth and quality of drinks we produce in this state."

Quote attributable to Flying Brick Cider Co. co-owner Lyndsay Sharp

"Familiarisation tours like this are dynamic conduits in forging a stronger connection between regional producers and end markets. All here are grateful for the opportunity to showcase our magical region."

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