

Media Release

Mr Tim Pallas MP

Treasurer

Minister for Industrial Relations

Minister for Trade and Investment



Friday, 17 February 2023

SPIRITS SOAR AS VICTORIAN BEVERAGE EXPORTS BOOM

Global demand for Victorian beverages is exploding, with local distilleries and drinks producers taking advantage of new trade opportunities with support from the Andrews Labor Government.

Minister for Trade and Investment Tim Pallas today visited Starward Distillery in Fishermans Bend where the company's expert distillers produce an award-winning range of whiskies enjoyed around the world.

In 2021/22, the value of Victorian beverage exports grew by 36 per cent to \$137 million with spirits a key to this growth. The value of spirits exports leapt by more than 60 per cent to \$34 million last financial year and has doubled in five years. Top markets are New Zealand, the United States and Singapore.

The growth of the distillery sector in Victoria from zero producers 15 years ago has been phenomenal. There are now about 120 distilleries in Victoria – the most of any state – directly employing more than 1,000 workers.

Victoria's wider drinks industry directly contributes \$10.7 billion to the economy, supporting more than 350,000 jobs in 23,000 licensed venues. That includes more than 1,000 businesses selling their own wine, beer, cider and spirits, including Starward Distillery.

Established in Essendon in 2007, Starward now exports to 19 countries. This includes the company's key market, the United States, where products are available in 37 states and feature on the drinks list in four out of five Michelin-star restaurants.

Starward's success has been recognised internationally, with the company taking out the coveted *Most Awarded Distillery of the Year* at the San Francisco World Spirits Competition 2022 for receiving the most golds at the event.

Global Victoria is helping exporters reach new markets through a packed schedule of trade missions, including FOODEX Japan and ProWein Germany in March and Fine Food New Zealand in June, which will help promote Victorian-made beverages to the world.

The \$1.5 million *Drink Victorian* program is also supporting the beverage sector by encouraging venues around the state to feature more local drinks on their menu. For more information about support programs provided by Global Victoria, including upcoming trade missions, visit global.vic.gov.au.

Quotes attributable to Minister for Trade and Investment Tim Pallas

"Strong export growth for our beverages proves what we've known all along – Victorian-made drinks are some of the best in the world."

"We're proud to support local companies like Starward in taking their products to the world so that they can continue to grow their business at home, creating more jobs for Victorians."

Quote attributable to Member for Albert Park Nina Taylor

"Starward has made a terrific local contribution since it made the move to Fishermans Bend in 2016, providing dozens of jobs and supporting other local businesses as it has gone from strength to strength."

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Quotes attributable to Starward Distillery CEO Simon Marton

“Our exports have grown exponentially since 2020 and we can see that the global appetite for our award-winning whisky is strong, and we’re even more optimistic for the future.”

“At Starward we’re proud to be making our world-class whisky right here in Fishermans Bend and we thank the Victorian Government for their ongoing belief, engagement and support of our pursuits.”