

# Yarran Wines

Yenda, NSW

Yarran Wines, a family-owned winery in the Riverina region of New South Wales, has built a reputation for innovation and sustainability. Originally a small-scale operation, their forward-thinking approach demonstrates that premium wine production and sustainability can coexist harmoniously.



At the heart of Yarran Wines' philosophy is a dedication to sustainable practices, embedded in every aspect of production. From organic vineyard management to water conservation strategies, they prioritise environmental responsibility without compromising the integrity of their wines. Organic certification is a testament to their commitment to eco-conscious viticulture, ensuring that their processes align with environmental standards and importantly, changing consumer preferences.

At Yarran Wines, sound business decisions often result in positive environmental outcomes. The installation of solar panels lowers electricity usage and emissions while soil moisture monitoring helps avoid unnecessary water pumping, enabling control over vine vigour and yield. This approach produces fruit that is more balanced and intense in flavour, with lower yields that ripen faster, reducing the time the fruit is in the vineyard and minimising overall agricultural risk.

Since the 1970s, Yarran Wines have maintained a strong partnership with Murrumbidgee Irrigation to drive advancements in the winery's irrigation, water delivery and management.

## Irrigation advancements

Operating in a region where water conservation is critical, Yarran Wines has adopted innovative irrigation techniques to optimise water usage. Advanced soil moisture monitoring and drip irrigation systems allow for precise water management, reducing waste and enhancing vine health. These measures not only improve the efficiency of their vineyard operations but also support the long-term sustainability of the industry.

"I have an irrigation program set up via laptop. The only manual aspect is that I go up and open the outlet which feeds water to the property supply."

"From there the irrigation program controls the valves which automatically turn on and pump water to the vineyard based on the soil moisture."

"We have moisture probes in the vineyards to measure the moisture in the soil. This data supports our decision making as it is sent to our lab and determines the nature of our irrigation program."

This move to more efficient, automated irrigation systems is a perfect example of Yarran Wines' commitment to sustainability, guaranteeing both their water management and wine are of the highest quality.

## Working in partnership with Murrumbidgee Irrigation

When reflecting on their partnership with Murrumbidgee Irrigation, Yarran Wines sees it as both positive and ongoing. The winery values the company's reliability and commitment to continuous improvements in water delivery systems.

*"Murrumbidgee Irrigation delivers water to us in a way we can rely on. It's clean water that is securely delivered when we need it, which is vital to growing our quality grapes," says Sam Brewer, Winemaker at Yarran Wines.*





While the Riverina region generally provides favourable conditions for grape growing, maintaining clean water is crucial. Sam Brewer reflected on the occasional debris that his company faces, including trash and grass that block water intake screens, particularly after storms. Murrumbidgee Irrigation's assistance, for instance, installing grates to avoid debris buildup, has helped alleviate these problems, providing a constant water supply for the winery.

*"The water source comes straight from the Snowy system, so the quality is exceptional. It has low salinity, low sediment levels and is really clean which may not occur if we captured water on farm or bore systems."*

Additionally, because Yarran Wines is in a warm, dry region, reliable access to water is essential for producing high-quality grapes. If water access is compromised, there is a risk of missing critical irrigation windows when the vines need water most. This can result in reduced grape quality, or, in the worst case, a crop loss can occur.

"Our collaboration with Murrumbidgee Irrigation has seen big improvements in water delivery and efficiency, including a pipeline replacing an old existing open channel that used to leak a lot. The improvement in infrastructure and automation has been great," adds Sam Brewer, reflecting on the positive upgrades.



## Looking ahead

Looking ahead, Yarran Wines remains committed to advancing innovation and sustainability. By continuously exploring new methods to reduce their environmental footprint and improve their winemaking process, they set a benchmark for the industry. Their journey serves as an inspiring example of how a winery can successfully merge tradition, quality, and sustainability, ensuring a positive impact on both the land and the people who enjoy their wines. Murrumbidgee Irrigation's progressive approach will play a key role in Yarran Wines continued successes long into the future.

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