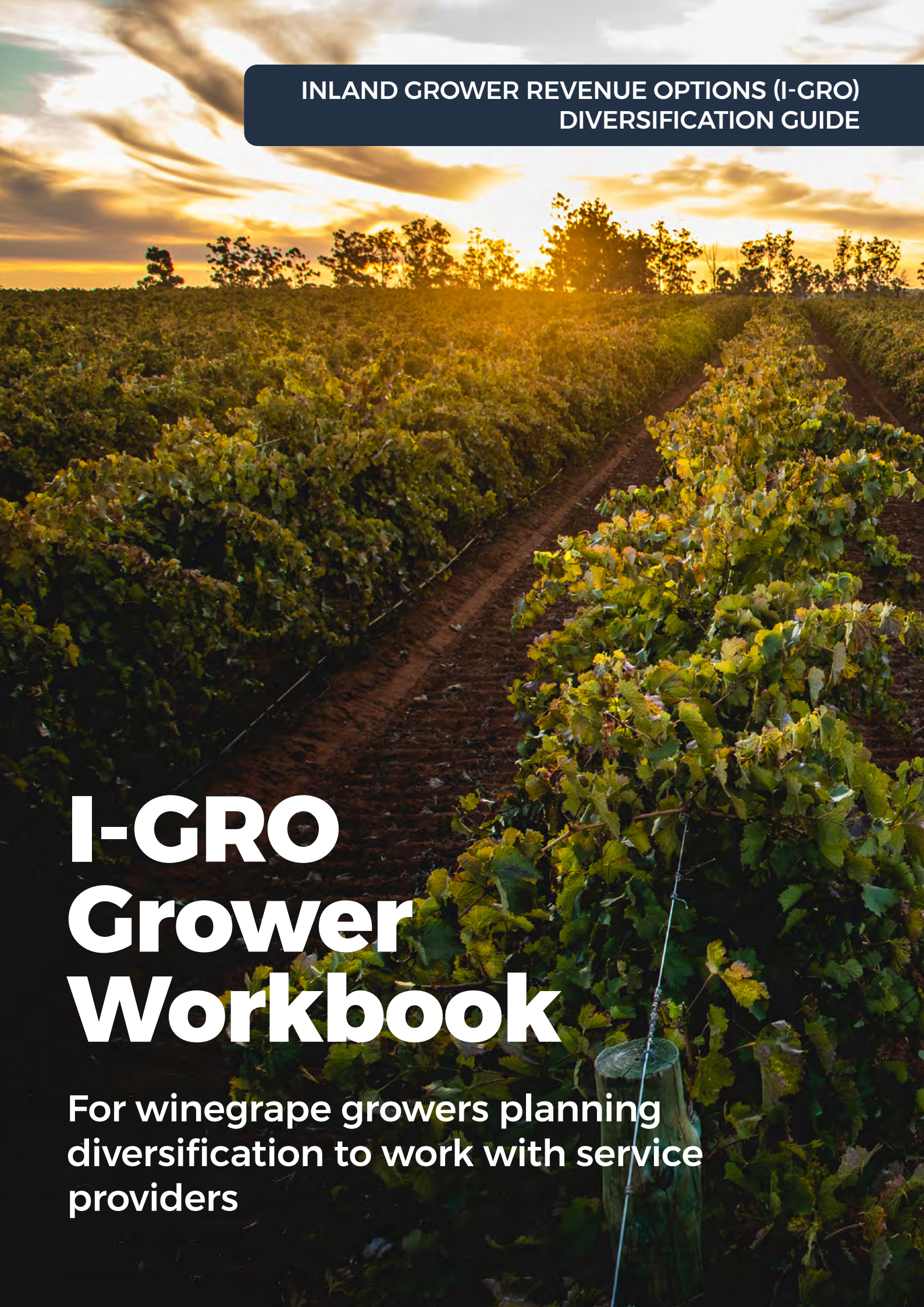
INLAND GROWER REVENUE OPTIONS (I-GRO)
DIVERSIFICATION GUIDE



I-GRO Grower Workbook

For winegrape growers planning diversification to work with service providers

Who supported the Diversification Guide?

The I-GRO Diversification Guide work was funded by the Australian Government Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry in response to the recommendations of the Viticulture and Wine Sector Working Group. The content and consultation to develop this Tool and Workbook was undertaken by RM Consulting Group (RMCG).

RMCG

The Tool and Workbook were developed based on consultation with inland region winegrowing industry associations, winegrape growers, service providers and other stakeholders (see Acknowledgements).

Version 1.2, June 2026

All photos are © Murray Valley Winegrowers unless otherwise stated

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- Riverland Wine
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- Adelaide University
- Wine Australia

RMCG would also like to thank the many winegrape growers, service providers, industry associations, government agencies and other stakeholders consulted throughout the project for their time and input.

Disclaimer

The content in this Workbook was finalised in June 2026. Please be aware that some market and financial information changes rapidly, so these parts of the Workbook will become out of date. Please treat that information accordingly.

The Workbook provides general information and activities, not financial advice. For financial advice, check you're working with a qualified person like your accountant or financial planner.

Acknowledgement of Country

We acknowledge the Traditional Owners of the Country on which we work throughout Australia and recognise their enduring connection to the land, waters, and culture. We pay our respects to their Elders, both past and present, and acknowledge emerging leaders. Furthermore, we express our gratitude for the knowledge and insights that Traditional Owners and other Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples contribute to our collective work in Australia.

We extend our respects to all Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities. We acknowledge that Australia was founded on the genocide and dispossession of First Nations peoples and affirm that sovereignty was never ceded in this country. We embrace the spirit of reconciliation, striving towards self-determination, equitable outcomes, and an equal voice for Australia's First Peoples.

The I-GRO Grower Workbook is part of the I-GRO Diversification Guide. Inland winegrape growers in the Murray Valley, Riverina and Riverland can complete this Workbook alongside their trusted service providers who are using the I-GRO Discussion Tool to identify, analyse and inform decisions about diversifying their farm businesses.

The Workbook contains templates and checklists that growers can complete with their service provider to produce a Farm Diversification Plan.

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Introduction

What is this Workbook for?

Australia's inland winegrape growers in the Murray Valley, Riverina and Riverland face challenging economic and environmental conditions. Due to an oversupply of winegrapes in the region, many growers are not making sufficient financial return. Growers who want to continue farming need alternate income streams from their land – either in addition to winegrapes, or in place of winegrapes.

This **Grower Workbook** is for use alongside the service provider Discussion Tool. The Discussion Tool has been designed for service providers to support you, the grower, and your thinking about your farm business.

The Workbook contains templates and checklists you can complete with your service provider. The full process might take 4 to 6 months of discussion and thinking, but at the end you'll have identified and tested alternative options for your business, and have developed a Farm Diversification Plan.

You can use the Workbook as it best suits you: some growers start at the beginning and work through all the modules, others will be guided by their service provider to the Workbook sections most useful for their situation.



Guide on a page

Grower Workbook Section	What the service provider does (Discussion Tool)	What the grower does (Grower Workbook) and ends up with	Typical timeframe
 **My Future** What do I want from farming and life?	• Guides discussion on goals, lifestyle and risk • Tests assumptions and trade-offs	• Clarifies goals and priorities • Records Future Vision and Goals	2–4 weeks
 **My Situation** What does my farm business currently offer?	• Helps audit farm capacity, finances and water position • Brings in specialist advice as needed	• Maps farm assets and constraints • Completes Farm Capacity, Financial Health checklists	2–4 weeks
 **My Options** What realistic alternatives are worth testing?	• Supports shortlisting and comparison of options, including market and pathway analysis	• Identifies and tests options • Develops shortlist of preferred options and does Option Analysis	4–8 weeks
 **My Plan** What is the best way forward, and how will I get there?	• Shapes a practical Plan (optional support for business case development)	• Selects preferred option Builds Farm • Diversification Plan and My Pathway (plan on a page)	4–8 weeks
 **My Final Check** Does the Plan stack up, and what support is needed next and ongoing?	• Tests Plan, including checking for risks and gaps • Encourages access to ongoing support	• Refines Plan and next steps • Finalises Farm Diversification Plan, and plans for periodic review and support options • Prints out My Pathway poster as ongoing guide	2–4 weeks (ongoing)

Why work with a service provider?

Trusted service providers like agronomists, accountants and financial counsellors, grower groups and mental health services, can support you in your decision making. Some service providers are free for eligible growers, while grants are available for other professional services.

Decisions to change farming practices are not generally made 'on the spot'. You need time to do your research to improve the likelihood of success. Conversations about farm finance can also be difficult and cause distress; these conversations require wrap-around support.

If you're making a decision to fundamentally change your farm business you might need:

- Several/ongoing conversations with people you trust
- Ample thinking time
- Various kinds of support - information, emotional support, encouragement
- To consider more than one potential option
- To see options 'in action', for example at a neighbouring farm or trial site
- To crunch the numbers
- A sensible, doable plan to take the farm from 'where it is now' to 'where it needs to be'.



A service provider will walk alongside you as you work through the options using this Workbook, and help you consider all the pros and cons of making changes to your farm.



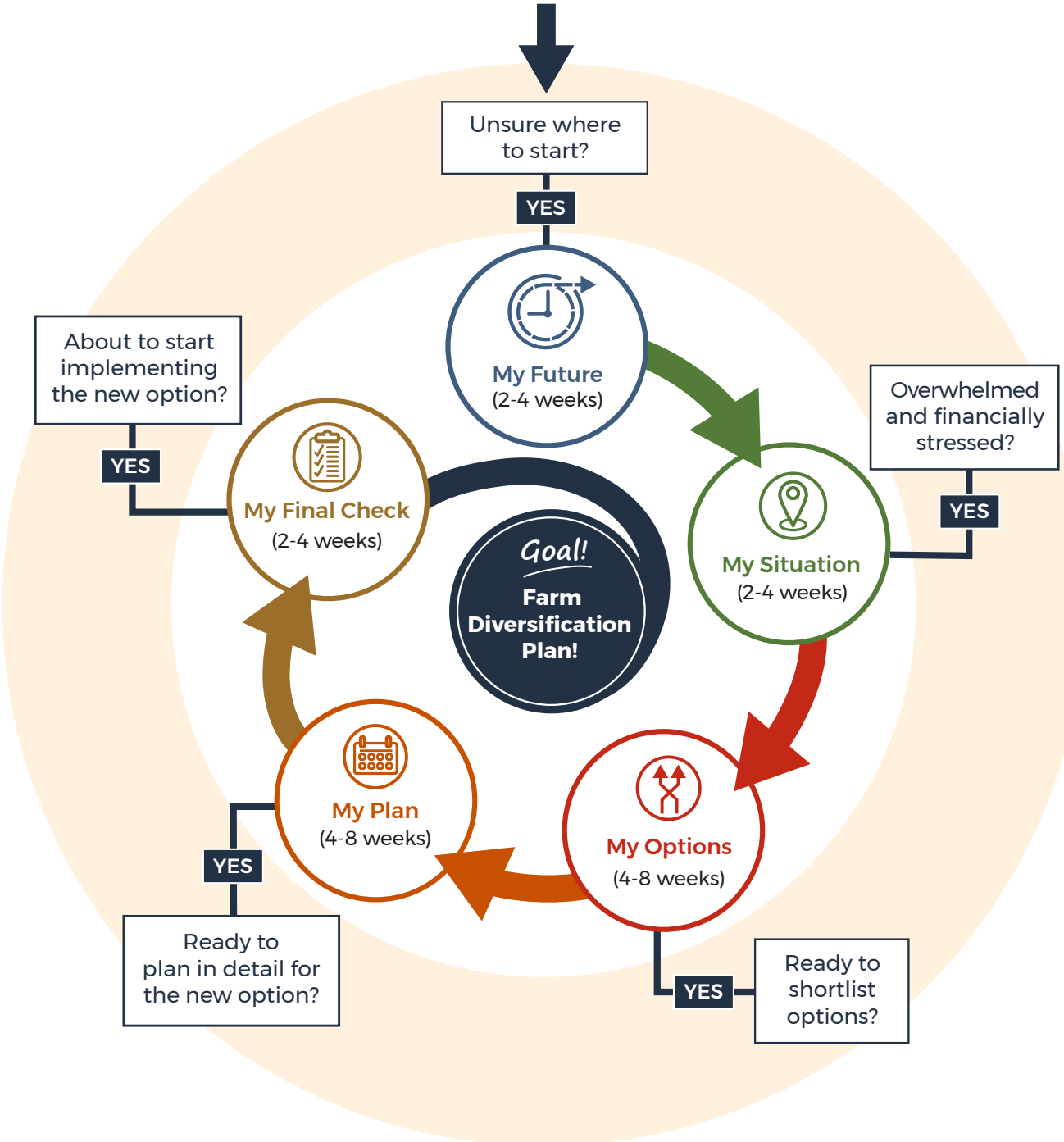
How is this Workbook structured?

The Workbook has five areas to build a well-grounded Farm Diversification Plan. These are **My Future**, **My Situation**, **My Options**, **My Plan** and **My Final Check** (see Figure A below).

At the end of each section, you'll be prompted to *Stop and Check*. This prompts you to talk through any remaining questions or concerns with your service provider, and ensures you are clear to move forward with the next set of activities.

The last section of this Workbook will step you through developing your Farm Diversification Plan and also your 'My Pathway' plan on a page. These two plans bring it all together, and will help you keep the farm changes on track over coming years.

Figure A: The structure of this Workbook is guided by the core components and cycle of farm diversification



On the following page we provide a general overview of the five sections in this Workbook as a 'Guide on a Page', with embedded links to more in-depth guidance and activities that are in this document.

Navigating the Grower Workbook

Throughout the Workbook there are coloured tabs that link directly link to the content in your service provider's Discussion Tool. This has also been done so you and your service provider always know where you are up to in the thinking process.

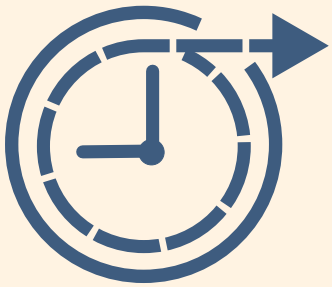
Workbook Section	Discussion Tool link	Approximate time to complete section
 **My Future**	Discussion Tool Section 1 | Page 10	2-4 weeks
 **My Situation**	Discussion Tool Section 2 | Page 15	2-4 weeks
 **My Options**	Discussion Tool Section 3 | Page 20	4-8 weeks
 **My Plan**	Discussion Tool Section 4 | Page 44	4-8 weeks
 **My Final Check**	Discussion Tool Section 5 | Page 56	2-4 weeks

NOTE: The I-GRO Discussion Tool and Workbook are not intended to support growers who wish to exit the industry. For those who want to leave farming or restructuring their farm business to sell it, information is included in the Discussion Tool under 'Want to Exit?' (Section 5.6).

Discussion Tool Section 5.6 | Page 63

Looking after your mental health during these conversations is really important. Seeking additional support to talk through anxiety, stress and the pressures you are experiencing as part of this process can help you to move forward with a clear head.

There are lots of resources and supports available such as Rural Aid, ifarmwell, and the National Centre for Farmer Health. Talk to your service provider or other people you trust if you need a hand.



1 My Future

1.1 Future vision and goals 9

How do you want your farm to look in 5-10 years?

Questions about your preferred future

Developing your goals

1.2 What if you want to exit? 12

If exiting is your best option, a range of service providers can help get the best out of that option

Overview
Understanding where you want to go and why is an important first step in planning. This section supports you to develop goals and a vision that will guide you through the rest of the activities in this Workbook.

This section also provides some information to discuss with your service provider, if you are considering the option of exiting.

"Fit your own mask before assisting others."

(Airline safety advice)

1.1 Future vision and goals

As a grower, you are the driving force behind your farm. This means it is essential to be clear about what you want from your day-to-day working life and what you can realistically sustain when making a decision to change or planning for the future.

This activity helps you explore your personal and professional goals, so you can make choices which line up with your vision for yourself and your farm.

The most important question to answer is:

Where do I see myself in 5-10 years' time?

Discussion Tool
Section 1.5 | Page 14

A vision expresses your main aim for your business. It says **why** you do what you do, and **what** it is you want to achieve. A vision statement should be :

- **Fairly general:** broadly defined but including the things that are most important
- **Aspirational:** a positive description of the kind of future you would really like
- **Brief:** simple and succinct so that you and your team can easily remember it.

Developing your vision should involve the key people in your team (e.g. partner, children, key investors, your farm manager). Sitting down together (potentially with your service provider) to talk through what ideas the team have for the future can be a good start.

Take time to jot down some of your initial thoughts:

**Note that a vision statement is something that should be referred to regularly. It is a check-in point where you can ask yourself, "Does this work or activity help me to achieve my vision?"*

Use the table below to build a clearer view of your preferred life as a grower. Answer each question honestly. There are no right or wrong answers – this is about what works for *you*.

Template 1.1 Questions about your preferred future

Questions	Your response
Where would you like to be living in 5-10 years? On the farm or elsewhere?	
How many hours of farm work a week would you like to be doing?	
Do you see yourself 'on the tools' or more 'in the office/ organising things'?	
Do you mostly want to work alone, or prefer to have a team?	
Who else do you need to consider in this (partner, friends, kids, parents, business partners), and how might they fit in this future view?	
What else will you want to be doing with your time, apart from farming?	

Goals break down the vision into more practical, or doable chunks. What are some specific outcomes or changes you want to achieve by changing how you farm?

Setting some parameters around your goals will make them attainable and removes the guesswork.

You can also refer to the SMART goal guidelines here. Examples of goals might include:

- Within the next 2 years, reduce my working hours so they fit into 5 days a week.
- Within 4 years, establish one extra revenue stream for the farm that evens out our cashflow and starts to pay down debt.

With your service provider and team, come up with 3-5 goals that connect to your vision statement above.

**Note that your goals are something that should be referred to regularly. You can come back to these as you work through the remainder of this Workbook and update them accordingly.*

1.2 What if you want to exit?

The Diversification Guide is for winegrape growers to think about options to continue farming. For some, a deep look at their situation and aspirations might lead to the conclusion that exit is the best option.

If you are planning to leave farming, or are restructuring your farm business to sell, some information is included in the Discussion Tool that might help. Service providers can be beneficial if you have decided to exit. For example:

1. Rural financial counsellor (to clarify options, identify supports, and who to contact next)
2. Community and mental health support (to manage wellbeing)
3. Accountant (to assess likely final financial position after sale of farm)
4. Lawyer (to explain options and process for selling farm)
5. Bank (to plan financial steps, acquit outstanding loans and manage balance of funds)
6. Land valuer and real estate agent (to price farm, advertise, and sell or lease out land)
7. Water corporation or trust representative (to sell or rescind water rights).

"Exit is a form of transition, not failure."

- Grower

If you are thinking of exiting, please talk to your service provider. There are some more ideas in the Tool that you can both draw on if needed.

Discussion Tool
Section 5.6 | Page 63



2 My Situation

2.1 Mapping your current situation 14

- Farm Capacity Checklist
  - » Your farmland
  - » Your farm equipment and infrastructure
  - » Your labour needs
  - » Your risk appetite and willingness to diversify
  - » Your market pathways

2.2 What if you want to exit? 19

- Farm level assessment considerations: compatibility checks, observation and learning from others, trialling new crops, assessing complexity, resource advantages, and risk analysis
- Farm Financial Health Checklist
  - » Revenue and profitability assessment
  - » Cash flow assessment
  - » Debt-serviceability and risk assessment
  - » Investment assessment

Overview
Understanding your whole-farm situation is important to plan best-fit diversification. This section of the Workbook steps you through checklists about Farm Capacity and Farm Financial position.

The information you collate in these checklists will feed into **Section 3 (My Options)** and **Section 4 (My Plan)**.

2.1 Mapping your current situation

2.1.1 Farm capacity checklist (farm details)

The Farm Capacity Checklist supports you to assess readiness and capacity to pursue new ventures, including land, infrastructure, productivity, labour and access to supply chains and networks.

Discussion Tool
Section 2.1 | Page 17

- For 'Your Farmland', consider the physical characteristics of your property. Is it suitable for current and future agricultural production? What can grow there?
- For 'Your Production', you assess the farm's current and potential productive capacity. This is a focus on yield performance, crop suitability, efficiency in production, and the things that influence outputs.
- For 'Your Farm Equipment and Infrastructure', think about how you could use your machinery, equipment and current infrastructure in a new enterprise. What can be used in another type of operation? What is the scalability?
- 'Your Labour Needs' assesses what staff and skills you currently have, and sets the scene for what a new venture would require in terms of human resources and upskilling.
- In 'Your Risk Appetite and Willingness to Diversify' you consider how much risk you enjoy, and how you tend to respond to emerging challenges and opportunities.
- For 'Your Market Pathways', consider elements such as packing and packhouse access, transport logistics, sales, market demand and alignment with potential new processor or retailer requirements.

Template 2.1 Farm Capacity Checklist

Key Questions	Your Response
Your farmland (physical characteristics of your property)	
What is the total landholding (ha)?	
How many hectares are suitable for horticulture?	
What is the predominant soil type on the farm?	
What are your known soil constraints such as salinity, sodicity and acidity?	
Does the farm have on-site water storage capacity (e.g. dams)?	
What is the annual water use allocation and delivery reliability (%)?	

Key Questions	Your Response
Your production information	
What crops or grape varieties are currently being produced?	
Are your yields in line with, above, or below regional or industry standards?	
Have yields been trending upward, stable or declining and what factors are influencing this?	
Which direction are you exploring – a tree crop, a vegetable crop, a non-crop option, or optimising the current vineyard? (if known)	
What are the key production constraints?	
Are existing trellis structure, irrigation systems and machinery adaptable to alternative crops?	
Are there any known inefficiencies or bottlenecks in labour, irrigation etc?	
Is production vulnerable to single risk factors (e.g. water security, seasonal labour availability)?	
Your farm equipment and infrastructure	
What fixed assets currently exist on the property (e.g. shed, pads, etc.)?	
Are any existing facilities suitable for other crop types?	
What irrigation infrastructure is currently in place (e.g. drip, overhead, pivots)?	
What machinery do you currently own?	

Is any machinery crop specific? What machinery is universally useful?	
What is the current cooling capacity, and is it sufficient for new perishable crops?	
Is existing sorting, grading and packing equipment adaptable to other products?	
Can the current infrastructure support increased land area, or production volume?	
Does existing infrastructure give you a competitive advantage for any new crops?	
Would diversification require investments in packing automation, facilities or traceability systems?	

Your labour needs

How is labour currently sourced – self and family, employees or contractors?	
What are the peak labour periods for the existing crops, and how many workers are required at that time?	
Do you have difficulty sourcing labour at specific points in the season?	
What are the key skills within your current workforce (e.g. machinery operation, pruning, crop monitoring)?	
Does your team have experience with other crops or production systems?	
Are specialised or reliable contractors available locally for alternate crops?	
Do you provide worker accommodation, or rely on local workforce availability?	

Key Questions	Your Response
Your risk appetite and willingness to diversify	
How open are you to trialling new crops, production systems and technologies?	
Do you view diversification as an opportunity, a necessity or a risk?	
How do you typically make decisions about adopting new practices or technologies?	
Do you rely on independent advice, or informal networks for information?	
Are you prepared to invest time and capital learning a new production system?	
Would you consider alternate trellising, different strategies or mechanisation?	
How comfortable are you with financial risk associated with new crop establishment periods?	
Would you consider staged diversification?	
How do you see the business evolving over the next 5-10 years?	

Key Questions	Your Response
Your market pathways	
How easy is it to reliably sell and move your produce now (e.g. distance to buyers or freight, access to trucks, regular pick-up, stable outlets)?	
What advantages does your farm have for getting product to market (e.g. close to a highway, near a processor or packing shed, local grower network)?	
What limitations in your area could make it harder or more costly to store, process or move products (e.g. no local processing, long freight distance, no cool storage)?	
Who around you could help strengthen your access to market, and how (e.g. neighbour growers, processors, Council regional development, industry bodies)?	

STOP AND CHECK!

- After stepping through your current situation with your service provider, do you feel that the farm has some advantages to proceed with diversification?
- Do you have any initial thoughts on which crops, products, or services these advantages suggest diversifying into?
- Is there anything you are concerned about or would like to know more about before proceeding?

Write your answers in the box below.

2.2 Understanding your numbers

"Look before you leap."

- Attributed to Greek storyteller, Aesop

2.2.1 Farm level

There are several steps in diversification decision-making. These include:

- **Compatibility checks** – assess if new enterprise/s align with your existing systems, skills, infrastructure, labour availability and vision for future farming work/life.
- **Observation and learning** from others – learning from others' experiences increases confidence and reduces uncertainty, demonstrates agronomic feasibility and also ensures infrastructure and supply chain are viable (e.g. inputs available, pathways to market established).
- **Trialling** cultivation and harvest – small scale trials reduce the risk of choosing a crop or option that won't suit the farm or yourself, and helps refine choices (e.g. genetics, systems), production and harvest (e.g. grading, packing) and marketing (e.g. establish relationship with agents, buyers) before scaling up.
- **Assessing complexity** – as complexity increases, so does risk; new enterprises may require new skills, systems, scale, compliance or certification. Very novel crop options may require the farm to invest in consumer education, in addition to meeting technical challenges of optimising genetics and production.
- **Resource advantages** – enterprises tend to succeed when they have an edge over competitor producers (e.g. soil, water, proximity to market, infrastructure or human capital). Assessing the 'edge' that each farm has can help guide diversification choices.
- **Risk analysis** – all farming (and business) decisions come with an element of risk. It is important to assess and cost out potential impacts of on-farm risks like pest and disease pressure/impact, potential biosecurity incursions, and yield sensitivity/variability[1].

Completing the **Farm Financial Health Checklist** (below) and the **Farm Capacity Checklist** (Section 2.1.1) can help you consider some of the above points and guide you in the best options for you and your farm business.

2.2.2 Farm financial health checklist

Discussion Tool
Section 2.2 | Page 18

The Farm Financial Health Checklist will help you evaluate your finances and assess how prepared you are for diversification. The following financial terms are in **Appendix 1: Financial terms explained**. They are useful indicators of farm financial health:

- Your revenue and current profit
- Cash flow
- Debt-serviceability and risk
- Investment assessment

[1] Agriculture Victoria (2025) Farm Diversification Decision-Making. agriculture.vic.gov.au/farm-management/business-management/new-landholders/farm-diversification-decisionmaking

Template 2.2 Farm Financial Health Checklist

Key Questions	Your Response
Your revenue and profit	
What is your current average revenue per hectare from grapes?	
Is your vineyard currently operating at a profit, break even, or loss?	
How has grape profitability changed over the past 3-5 years?	
What would be the minimum revenue per hectare required for a new crop to be financially worthwhile?	
What is the expected gross margin ($/ha) for the new crop? (if known)	
How long will it take for the new crop to reach full production and profitability?	
Do you have sufficient capital or cash flow to manage years of reduced income during establishment?	Yes ☐ No ☐
How do you see gross margins and net profit margins over the next 5 years?	
Is the business comfortable taking on a crop with higher market volatility if the potential returns are greater?	Yes ☐ No ☐
Would you favour lower variability in returns even if it means accepting lower profit potential?	Yes ☐ No ☐
Your cash flow	
Do you currently generate enough cash flow to cover operating expenses without relying on additional debt?	Yes ☐ No ☐
Do you maintain a cash reserve to manage seasonal downturns or unexpected costs?	Yes ☐ No ☐
Do you know how many months the business could continue operating if income temporarily declined?	Yes ☐ No ☐
Have you estimated the cash flow required to establish a new crop, including years with limited or no return?	Yes ☐ No ☐
Do you have sufficient borrowing capacity or financial reserves to manage cash flow gaps during diversification?	Yes ☐ No ☐
Do you have another income source that can support the business during low revenue periods?	Yes ☐ No ☐

Key Questions	Your Response
Your debt and risk assessment	
Can your current cash flow comfortably cover existing debt or loan repayments?	Yes ☐ No ☐
Have you experienced difficulty meeting loan repayments in recent years?	Yes ☐ No ☐
Have you assessed whether the business could service additional debt if required for diversification?	Yes ☐ No ☐
Do you have sufficient equity to borrow against if needed?	Yes ☐ No ☐
Would additional funding materially increase the farm's debt exposure or financial risk?	Yes ☐ No ☐
Would lenders view your business as low, moderate, or high risk if you apply for new finance? (e.g. are you currently accessing the Farm Household Allowance?)	Yes ☐ No ☐
Your investment suitability	
Do you have a clear understanding of the current value of your farm assets including land, water and equipment?	Yes ☐ No ☐
Are you willing to sell or refinance existing assets to support the transition to a new crop?	Yes ☐ No ☐
Have you estimated the return on investment for the new enterprise compared with maintaining current operations?	Yes ☐ No ☐
What are the primary objectives of the proposed investment?	
Do you have capacity to cover ongoing operating costs once the investment is made?	Yes ☐ No ☐
How much capital can the business invest without compromising day-to-day cash flow?	
Have you completed sensitivity analysis to understand how changes in key variables may affect profitability?	Yes ☐ No ☐
Does your planned change align with business succession, exit planning, or intergenerational goals?	Yes ☐ No ☐

STOP AND CHECK!

- After stepping through your farm financials with your service provider, do you feel that you are well-placed to proceed with diversification on your farm?
- Do you have any initial thoughts on how you might leverage your existing assets to support diversification?
- Do you feel like you are wanting to take on more risk, or less risk? What could this look like for you?
- Is there anything you are concerned about or would like to know more about before proceeding?

Write your answers in the box below.

Reminder: It is okay to talk to your service provider about exit options. If you have arrived at this point and you feel like diversification isn't for you, be sure to talk with the right people.

For those considering exit or restructuring their farm business to sell, information is included in the Tool under 'Want to exit?' (Section 5.6). The support of service providers can be beneficial to those exiting.

Discussion Tool
Section 5.6 | Page 63

3 My Options

3.1 Identifying options for growth or diversification 24

- Where your options are:
  - » Who will buy?
  - » Can it compete profitably?
  - » What could affect market access or stability?
- Pathway to market

3.2 Market Analysis 26

- Scenario analysis
- My business on a page

Overview
This section is where you will decide your best and preferred option(s) for diversification, drawing on your understanding of current farm capacity and financial health (developed in Mapping your current situation), and your vision and goals (developed in **Section 1**).

In this section of the Workbook there is some guidance around diversification options and key considerations including: who will buy it, can it compete profitably, and what could affect market access or stability?

Discussion Tool
Section 3 | Page 20

You will start a process of shortlisting options using scenario analysis and the Business Model Canvas (BMC). These tools help you think through preferred options at a relatively high level. From this, you will be able to shortlist option(s) to analyse in-depth in **Section 4 (My Plan)** and **Section 5 (My Final Check)** of the Workbook.

Note: It is absolutely fine to change your mind and come back to the start of this section. You might make it halfway through Section 3 or 4, and realise that the option you thought was viable, is not going to work out. It's much cheaper and less painful to do that on paper, than when the plants are already in the ground.

If the first option you select isn't right, return to this section and select a different option to analyse.

3.1 Identifying options for growth or diversification

"When the world zigs, zag."

- Attributed to Barbara Noakes (1982)

3.1.1 Key questions

In the past, decisions about what to grow on a farm were often more production-led (*What can I grow?*) than market-led (*What will I be able to sell?*). Farms often grow what they have always grown, or crops that are familiar and widely grown in the local area.

Now, input costs have increased and margins are tight. Many are competing in a corporatised environment with some substantial dominant players. This means it is a good idea to take a detailed look at the market before settling on a particular crop or strategy to diversify farm income.

Discussion Tool
Section 3.1 | Page 21

There are a range of questions to ask and attempt to answer, to be confident that the diversification strategy will land your farm in a more secure, lucrative or stable revenue position. The three main questions are:

Who will buy it?

You will need to identify the target buyer/s and what drives their decision to buy a product. This might include: price, quality, provenance, reliability of supply or consumer trends. It is wise to check if demand for the product is growing, steady, or declining. Ideally, you are looking for real, lasting 'market pull' rather than a short-term opportunity. See **Appendix 1: Financial terms explained**.

Can it compete profitably?

Develop a clear idea of realistic/likely prices beyond the farm gate and assess what portion usually returns to the grower. It can be useful to compare competitors' costs (if available) and test various margins against likely yield, quality grades, and price variations to ensure your option remains profitable with fluctuations over time.

Running the numbers using a range of assumptions about yield and return (best case, worst case) is a form of 'sensitivity testing' to work out how tight the likely margins are and hence how risky or robust a particular option might be. Sensitivity testing is explained in **Appendix 1: Financial terms explained**.

What could affect market access or stability?

You will need to consider external factors that could impact success. These can include competition from imports, regulation, trade barriers, competition into export markets, shifting consumer preferences, or input/supply fluctuations. Seeking to understand these risks for alternate crops will help you to judge how secure or volatile that diversification option may be.

In **Section 3.2** you will look at market analyses you can undertake to explore and identify what diversification options will suit your vision, your farm capacity, and your financial situation.

"Eyes on the forest, not on the trees."

- Collins, S. (2010) The Mockingjay: Hunger Games Book 3. Scholastic Inc.

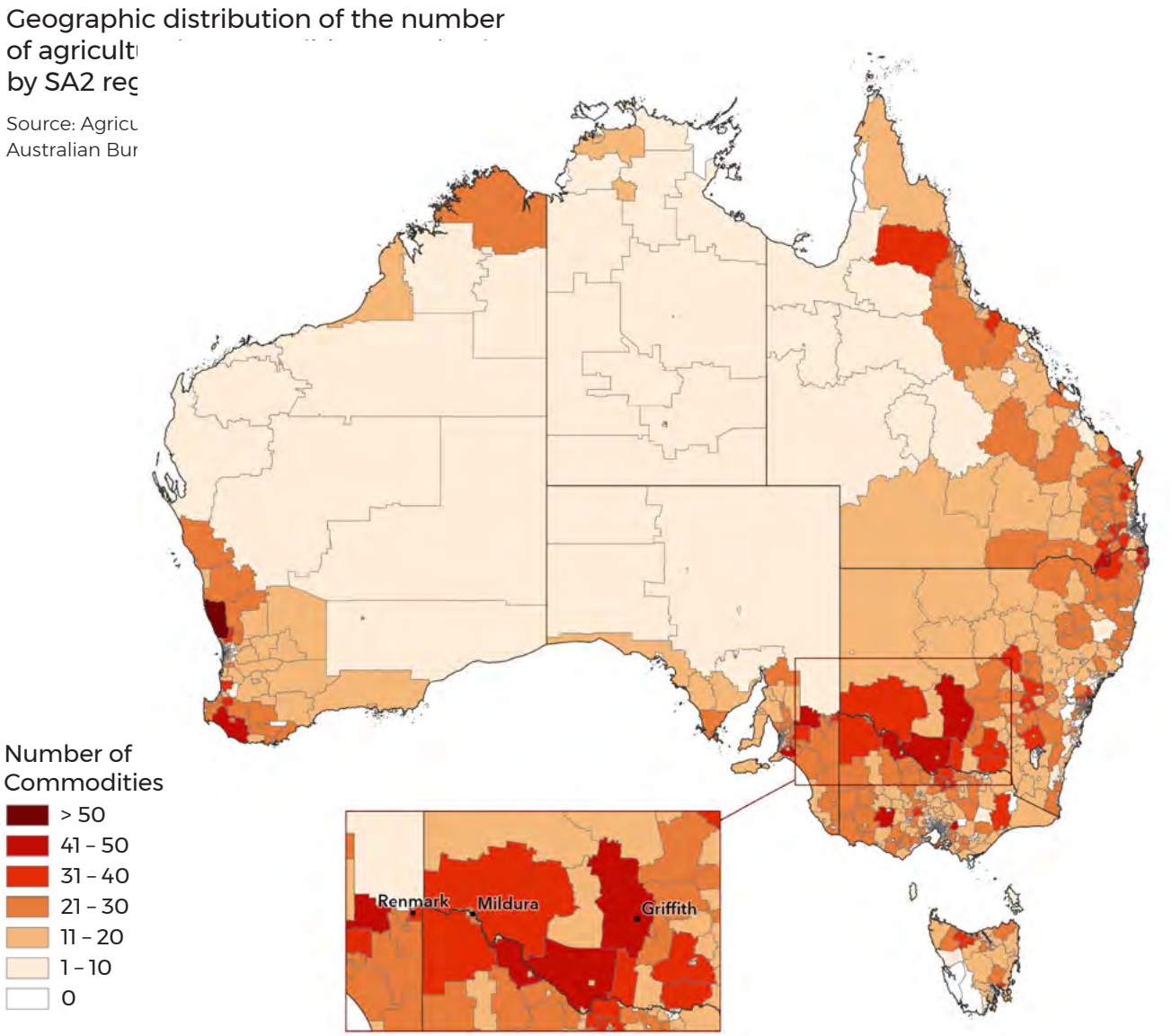
3.1.2 Pathway to market

Pathway to market is about the intervening part; the barriers and enablers between the farm gate and the buyer. You will need to assess what infrastructure exists or is needed, including physical supply channels, consumer readiness, access to agents, grading standards and options for seconds/value adding. You have already started considering the pathway to market advantages of your farm in **Section 2.1** Farm capacity.

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The Murray Valley, Riverina and Riverland are already highly diversified, which suggests that supply chain infrastructure and local knowledge likely exist for a wide range of alternatives to winegrapes (Figure 3.1).

Figure 3.1 Inland winegrowing regions have highly diversified crop production[2]



[2] Lawes, R. and Herrmann, C. (2025) Diversification in Australian agriculture: a comprehensive overview. www.farminstitute.org.au/wp-content/uploads/2025/06/LawesHerrmann-FPJ_Vol.22_No.1_2025.pdf

3.2 Market analysis

"Keep your finger on the pulse."

This section is about identifying and prioritising your diversification options and making sure they align with your goals and capacity (completed in **Section 1** and **Section 2.1**). The process of market analysis for a new crop option can be challenging especially if you have longstanding production practices and knowledge, and an established pathway to market/buyer.

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Change is hard and it is important that you take time and seek diverse, high quality information about the realities of making decent money from a new revenue option. Table 3.1 lists various sources for market information, and explains some of the strengths and limitations of each.

Table 3.1 Gathering market information from a range of sources to build a full picture

SOURCE	INFORMATION AVAILABLE	STRENGTHS	LIMITS / CAUTIONS
1. Peak industry body (for chosen crop)	Industry scale and structure, market access pathways, standards and specifications, levy-funded research and reports.	Highly crop-specific, commercially grounded, credible with banks and investors.	Quality varies between industries and information may emphasise upside over risk.
2. Industry processors, buyers, aggregators	Actual demand volumes, price drivers, quality specifications, contract structures, logistics requirements.	Current, real-world intelligence that tests whether a market is genuine.	Information is informal and uneven; buyers may discourage new supply if impacts margins.
3. Local successful growers	Practical insights on prices, buyers, grading/ quality, timing, quality risks, establishment and scaling realities.	Highly regionally relevant and experience-based.	Growers can be cagey and insights may not transfer to new entrants/different farm set-up.
4. State Departments of Agriculture	Crop suitability, regional trials, yield and gross margin ranges, market access notes, case studies.	Strong regional focus and often candid about risks.	Market analysis may be shallow, coverage/ depth varies by state.
5. Levy-funded Research and Development Corporations (RDCs) (e.g. Horticulture Innovation Australia; Wine Australia)	Market demand trends, consumer and retail insights, supply–demand analysis, export opportunities.	High credibility and good commercial relevance.	Best coverage/ information is for established crops; some reports require levy access.
6. Emerging and non-levy industry RDC - AgriFutures Australia	Emerging crop profiles, value chain descriptions, market snapshots, R&D roadmaps.	Useful for diversification decisions, accessible for growers.	Coverage and currency vary by crop, data can be limited for new industries.
7. Australian Bureau of Agricultural and Resource Economics and Sciences (ABARES)	Commodity outlooks, trade and export data, long-term demand trends, global market context.	Very credible, useful for testing big-picture demand.	Big picture focus – limited detail for niche crops.

CONSIDER GLUT RISK: A glut in agribusiness, or market over supply, occurs when production of a product exceeds demand which causes a fall in prices. This then threatens the financial viability of a business. Market analysis should be a process that is iterative – 'keep your finger on the pulse'. This continual check-in process and market research will help you to identify risks of glut.

3.2.1 Scenario analysis

Before doing a deep dive into a preferred option, it can be useful to shortlist options via a high-level, analysis of preferred options and initial ideas. You can use the template below to explore each option. It is a good idea to map each back to your vision and goals (**Section 1.1**).

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Once you have completed this high-level analysis you will have a better idea of which options might be viable on your farm. You can then narrow down to 2 or 3 options to complete the remaining activities in this section, and **Section 4**.



Template 3.1 Scenario analysis template

OPTION 1

Why are you considering this option?

OPERATING ENVIRONMENT

Climate



Consider preferred climate (e.g. hot, drier, frost intolerant etc.)

Water



Consider water needs and irrigation

Soil and nutrients



Consider type of soil (characteristics), pH and drainage requirements

Pest and disease risk



Consider current and potential pest and disease risks and management options (including costs associated with this)

Harvest and post-harvest considerations



Consider type of harvesting equipment needed, labour requirements, transport, processing and market demands

PROFIT POTENTIAL AND MARKET OUTLOOK

Investment timeline:

Market opportunities:

Similar options I could consider:

Other notes:

3.2.2 My business on a page

* This is an optional next step or an alternative activity to the scenario analysis.

The Business Model Canvas (BMC) can expand on your scenario analysis. Having narrowed your preferences down to 2 or 3, you can work your way through the BMC for each one. Comparing the BMC for each option will show up new ideas, pros and cons, and things to double check, before you decide on a preferred option.

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Section 3.4.1 | Page 29

The BMC is a simple 'plan on a page' that helps you map how a new revenue idea might work in practice. The BMC can help break down how viable the option is, including who will buy it (customer segments), what their specific needs are (quality, quantity, methods of delivery) and the range of systems that might need on-farm and beyond the farm (e.g. advice, skills and inputs).

The BMC is made up of nine building blocks which fit into three general areas:

Marketplace

- **Customer segments** – Who are your customers?
- **Customer relationships** – How do you find new customers and keep them?
- **Channels** – How do you deliver your product to the market and customers?
- **Value proposition** – What is the customer need you satisfy so they buy from you?

Production

- **Key resources** – What resources (things) do you use to grow or make your product?
- **Key activities** – What activities (work) do you undertake to grow or make your product?
- **Key partnerships** – Who outside of your team enables your business to operate?

Money

- **Cost structure** – What are all of the costs to make or grow your product?
- **Revenue streams** – How does the business earn money?

You can complete the BMC template on the following page based on the work you have completed so far.



Business Model Canvas

MARKETPLACE

Customer segments

Customer relationships

Channels

Value proposition

PRODUCTION

Key resources

Key activities

Key partnerships

MONEY

Cost structure

Revenue streams

STOP AND CHECK!

- What is the option(s) you are proceeding with and why?
- Do you have any concerns or major risks that are causing you to hesitate? How can these be resolved or managed?
- Have you spoken with a range of people and received enough advice and input from experts about the options you might want to diversify into?
- Does your preferred option(s) align with your vision and goals for your farm?

Write your answers in the box below.



4 My Plan

4.1 Diversification steps 33

- Diversification steps (over 5 years)

4.2 Diversification steps 37

- Diversification checklists
  - » How will I manage and resource the new option?
  - » Labour requirements
  - » Skills and knowledge
  - » Equipment and infrastructure risk
  - » Compliance and record keeping
  - » Contingency and risk management

4.3 My Farm Diversification Plan 42

- Your in-depth plan using the work you have completed throughout this Workbook

4.4 My Pathway 43

- Your overarching strategic business direction

Overview
In this section of the Workbook, you will dive deeper into your preferred diversification option (identified in **Section 3**). You will work with your service provider to develop a Farm Diversification Plan. This is an actionable and staged plan to guide you over the coming years if you choose to diversify into your preferred option.

You will also develop your overarching strategic plan – My Pathway – which sets out where you want to go and how you will get there.

To complete these activities, you will need to draw on:

- **Section 1.1 Future Goals and Vision**
- **Section 2.1.1 Farm Capacity**
- **Section 2.2.2 Farm Financial Health**
- **Section 3.2 Market Analysis**

4.1 Diversification steps

The activities in this section sketch out the steps you will take over the next five years to transition your current farm setup to your preferred future setup. This will form the basis of your 'Farm Diversification Plan'. **Section 4.4** provides you with a structure and guidance for creating your Plan, that you can use with support of your service provider.

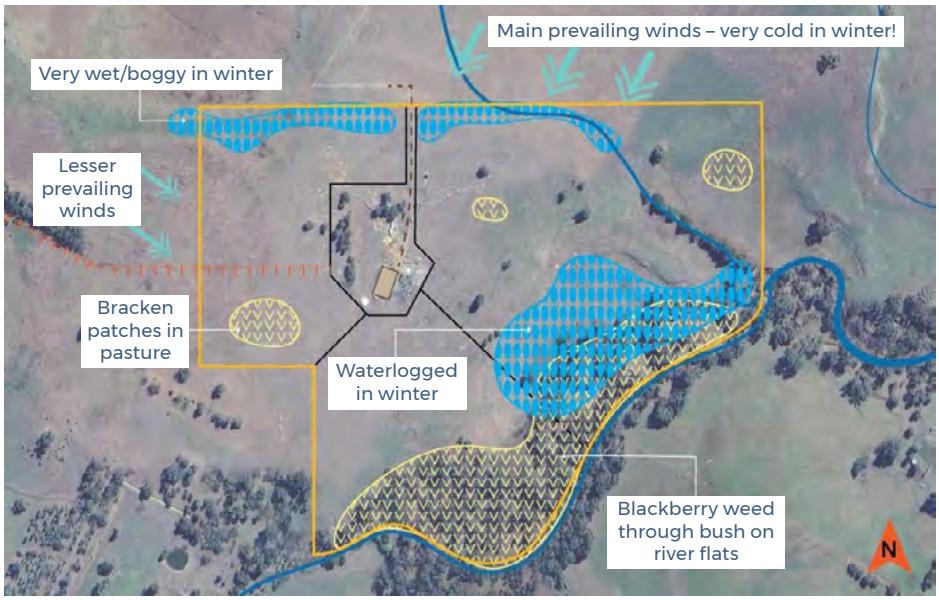
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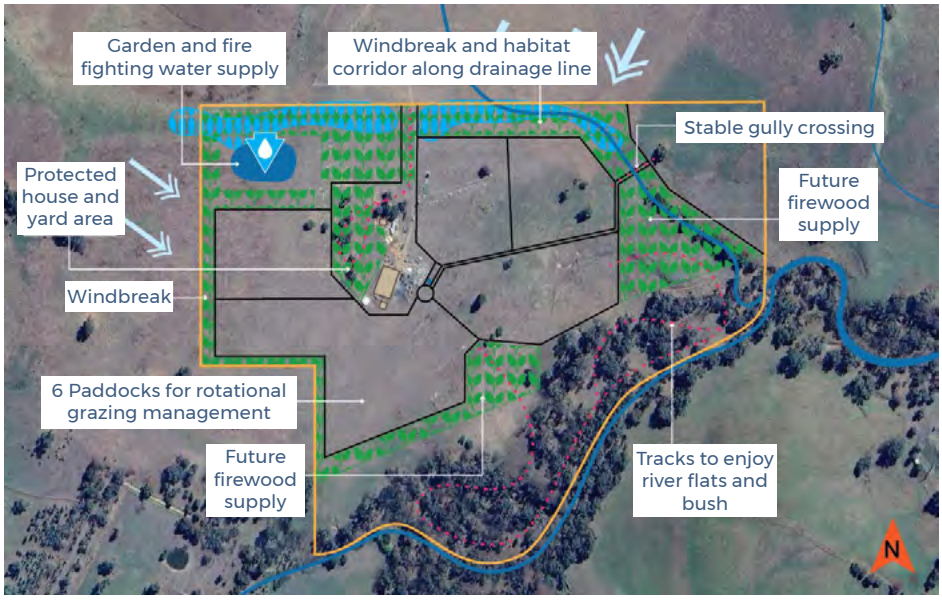
To get the best out of your Farm Diversification Plan, look at it regularly and review your progress. Review is a good time to consider what has changed on your property and what needs to be updated in your Plan.

It helps to use an aerial photo of your property and the tables below, to step out and visualise tasks that you will undertake each year to achieve the new farm setup.

Figure 4.1 shows an aerial photo of a farm with current state (A), and ideal state in five years (B)[3].

Figure 4.1 Now and future versions of your farm aerial view





RESOURCE

Australian Wine Research Institute vineyard removal and waste guide information pack

A useful resource on vineyard removal and waste can be found **HERE**. There is also a spreadsheet tool linked on the first page of the guide.

[3] Mitchell Shire Council (2024) Farm Plan Template. Accessed December 2025 at www.mitchellshire.vic.gov.au/assets/general-downloads/Environment-and-sustainability/Farm-Plan-template.pdf

Below are activities and questions to support development of your Farm Diversification Plan. Go back to your answers in the Farm Capacity Checklist **Section 2.2.1** and Farm Financial Health Checklist **Section 2.2.2** to help answer these questions.

Template 4.2 Diversification activities – year one

Questions	Your Response	Worked example
Which vineyard blocks will be removed this year?		*Remove 2/3 of vines*
What soil remediation is required before replanting?		*Rip, compost, cover crop.*
What new enterprises will be established this year?		*Jujubes and vegetables.*
What short-term cash flow will replace lost grape income?		*Vegetable cropping.*
What infrastructure must change or be added?		*Irrigation layout changes.*
What external advice will I rely on this year?		*Agronomist and soil consultant.*
What new skills or training do I need immediately?		*Tree crop establishment basics.*
What market research will I do this year?		*Speak with processors and buyers.*
What early market signals will I track?		*Prices, demand, specifications.*
What is my estimated total cost this year?		*$XXX,XXX.*
What are the biggest risks this year?		*Cashflow gap and establishment failure.*
How will I monitor progress and record decisions?		*Enterprise spreadsheet with monthly check-ins.*

Template 4.3 Diversification activities – year three

Questions	Your Response	Worked example
What proportion of the farm is now diversified?		*2/3 of farm is non-grapes.*
How are the new enterprises performing agronomically?		*Jujubes getting bigger; vegetables stable.*
What income is each enterprise generating?		*Vegetables generating cash; jujubes minimal income.*
Are markets still attractive and realistic for each enterprise?		*Mixed but viable.*
What market research will I do this year?		*Test market pathways and pricing assumptions.*
What processing or aggregation pathways must be secured?		*Identify jujubes and agave processing options and requirements.*
What feedback am I getting from buyers or processors?		*Quality promising: specs clarified.*
Which block or enterprise transitions next?		*Pumpkin area transitions to agave.*
What preparation is required for that transition?		*Soil prep, planting stock, irrigation checks.*
What new advice or skills are needed now?		*Identify olive and agave harvest and processing options and requirements.*
What is my cash flow position this year?		*Tight but manageable.*
What decisions must be made before next season?		*Confirm agave pathway, scale, and budget.*

Template 4.4 Diversification activities – year five

Questions	Your Response	Worked example
Which enterprises are now productive?		*Jujubes producing; vines now earning; agave established.*
What income does each enterprise contribute?		*More evenly spread income.*
How are winegrapes performing relative to expectations?		*Some price rebound; grapes contributing again.*
Are markets secure and diversified across enterprises?		*Multiple pathways; not reliant on one buyer.*
What market research will I do this year?		*Forward pricing, contracts, and buyer check-ins.*
What trends or risks am I seeing in each market?		*Ongoing volatility; input costs and labour risk.*
Should any enterprise be expanded, reduced or paused?		*Expand the best performer; adjust the weakest or replace.*
Is infrastructure still fit for the current mix?		*Yes, with minor upgrades.*
How resilient is the whole system now?		*Higher than Year 1.*
What skills or labour gaps remain?		*Harvest and seasonal labour coordination.*
How does this mix compare to grape-only returns?		*Lower overall risk; more stable cash flow.*
What is my priority focus for the next 5 years?		*Optimise yields, lock in markets, keep flexibility.*

4.2 Diversification checklists

How will I manage and resource the new option?

Growing a new crop isn't only about money. It also requires time, skills, labour and the right equipment.

This section helps you think through whether you currently have the capacity to grow the crop, and how you can find support if challenges arise.

Template 4.5 Day-to-day operation checklist

Items	What to think about	Grower notes
Key tasks	Planting, irrigation, spraying, harvest, packing	
Timing	When each task happens during the year	
Peak workload periods	Busy weeks or months	
Fit with existing enterprise	Does it clash with other crops?	

Labour requirements

Labour availability is often a big concern on the farm. This section helps you check how many people you will need at different times of the year and the skills and knowledge you might need.

Template 4.6 Labour planning table

Task	Who will do it?	Hours needed	Cost ($) hours x rates	When needed
Planting				
Spraying				
Irrigation				
Harvest				
Ongoing maintenance				
Total labour cost				

Template 4.7 Skills assessment

Questions	Answers	
Have I grown this crop before or a similar crop?	Yes ☐	No ☐
Do I understand its main risks?	Yes ☐	No ☐
Will I need training or advice?	Yes ☐	No ☐
Can I access reliable technical support/contractors?	Yes ☐	No ☐

Equipment and infrastructure risk

This section checks whether you already have the equipment you need for a new crop, or whether extra investment is required.

Template 4.8 Equipment checklist

Item	Already have?	Need to buy/ upgrade	Grower notes
Machinery (tractors, spraying)	Yes ☐ No ☐		
Harvest equipment	Yes ☐ No ☐		
Irrigation system	Yes ☐ No ☐		
Storage / harvest / cooling storage	Yes ☐ No ☐		
Packing / handling	Yes ☐ No ☐		



Compliance and record keeping

Many crops come with compliance requirements that may be new to a grower if the crop has not previously been grown at the farm. This checklist helps you identify what new systems you may need for the new option.

Template 4.9 Compliance checklist

Area	New system needed?		Grower notes
Chemical use and records	Yes ☐	No ☐	
Food safety and quality standards	Yes ☐	No ☐	
Accreditation and audits	Yes ☐	No ☐	
Workplace safety	Yes ☐	No ☐	

Contingency and risk management

This section helps you think through what could go wrong with your preferred option, and how you would need to respond to each risk.

Template 4.10 Contingency Planning

Risk	Likely impact	What will I do?
Labour shortage	Delayed operations	
Poor season and yield	Lower income	
Price drop	Reduced cash flow	
Equipment failure	Downtime	
Biosecurity incursion	On-farm response	

STOP AND CHECK!

Now is the time to check in and make sure the option(s) you have chosen is looking right for you. Consider:

- Do you have any hesitations about this diversification option(s)? If so, why?
- Do you have any concerns or issues that may affect the success of diversification? Is there anything else that you need to talk to your service provider about?
- Did anything come up during your answers to the questions in Section 3.1 that made you feel worried or concerned?

Write your answers in the box below and discuss with your service provider.

REMEMBER

The diversification process takes time. It may take you 6-12 months to complete the steps in this Workbook. Checking and checking again is important when you are potentially going to invest significant time and money into a new revenue stream.

4.3 My Farm Diversification Plan

By this point in the Workbook, you will have a picture of what you want for your future, what the farm might reasonably support, and which diversification option(s) you are planning to pursue. You have done all the thinking to see what your farm could look like and how you will get there. The next step is to pull all your thinking together and turn it into a consolidated plan.

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Your Farm Diversification Plan needs to be both realistic and workable. At this stage, service providers play a central role. They can help you to review and re-test ideas, fill gaps in knowledge, and walk through decisions in a way that reduces risk and builds confidence.

Your Farm Diversification Plan should be structured similar to the following, pulling information from the activities you completed earlier in this Workbook. The Farm Diversification Plan might end up being between 20-25 pages.

Table 4.3 Farm Diversification Plan structure and content guidance

SECTION NAME	CONTENT	RELEVANT ACTIVITY / TEMPLATE	PAGE NUMBER
Introduction	Overview of your farm (e.g. ha, location, people, history, farm map). (1 page)	2.1 Mapping your current situation	14
Vision and Goals	Provide your final vision statement and 3-5 goals. (1 page)	1.1 Future goals and vision	9
Situation	Detail why you are diversifying and what led you to this point. Draw on your Farm Financial Health Checklist and Farm Capacity Checklist to provide context for your shift. (1-2 pages)	2.1 Mapping your current situation 2.2 Understanding your numbers	14 19
New revenue option(s): Market analysis	This is where you will describe your choice of diversification option(s). Provide detail on your market analysis. Copy across your BMC and scenario analysis of your chosen option(s). (3-5 pages)	3.2 Market analysis	26
Transition stages	Your transition activities over the 5-10 year period. The details on: · How will I manage and resource the new option? · Labour requirements · Skills and knowledge · Equipment and infrastructure risk · Compliance and record keeping · Contingency and risk management. (5-7 pages)	4.1 Diversification steps 4.2 Diversification checklists	33 37

SECTION NAME	CONTENT	RELEVANT ACTIVITY / TEMPLATE	PAGE NUMBER
Review process	This section details how you will monitor success over time and keep checking on progress towards achieving your goals and vision. You should review your Plan regularly and confirm strategic direction. (1 page)	**5.1 Refine your Plan** **5.2 Using your Plan to guide change**	47 48
My Pathway	You can include your strategic plan on a page at the beginning of your Plan, as an appendix, or stick it up on your office wall. (1 A3 page)	**4.4 My Pathway**	43

We recommend opening a new Word document and copying the content that we have recommended above, using the guidance provided to structure your Plan.

You can use the following template to capture your pathway as a plan on a page. This is a high-level, strategic overview of your Farm Diversification Plan.



4.4 My pathway

Summarise your Farm Diversification Plan on a page. The A3 poster on the following page can be put up on the wall of your office to remind you of where you are going, why and what you are hoping to achieve. This is also a useful tool to communicate with your farm team and family.

The poster is for your **first year** of transition and you can update it for each subsequent year.

MY PATHWAY | Plan on a page

My vision statement

section 1.1

My 3-5 goals for 20 __

section 1.1

My needs

What is your current reality?	What do you want to change or improve?	What does the evidence show us?

Key inputs

What resources are necessary to achieve my goals this year?

Key activities

What activities will help me meet my goals this year? Draw on Section 4.1 Transition Steps to complete this.

Key outputs

What are the things I will see as a result of these activities?

Desired outcomes

What are the changes I will see as a result of this work?

STOP AND CHECK!

- Are there any areas in your Farm Diversification Plan that need further thinking? Is there anything you are unsure about?
- Do you still feel like your vision and goals are relevant and align with what you are hoping to achieve?
- Were there any gaps in your final Farm Diversification Plan or My Pathway 'plan on a page' that you need to address with your service provider?

Write your answers in the box below.



5 My Final Check

5.1 Refine your plan 47

How to revisit and keep adjusting your plan while you transition your farm from its current state to future state

5.2 Using your plan to guide change 48

Using evidence and external measures to test how good your plan is for guiding change, and how it can be improved

5.3 Where to find ongoing help and advice 49

- Connect and learn from others
- Where to find ongoing support
- Resources and networks
- What else?

Overview
Congratulations! You made it to the end of this Workbook and have created a solid pathway to diversify into your chosen option(s). This section is about going back through your work and refining your Plan, checking your logic again, and seeing if you need further help and advice.

You will also work with your service provider to decide how you will start using your Plan to guide change, review and update the approach, track progress and measure success.

5.1 Refine your Plan

Once your Farm Diversification Plan is developed, the next step is to keep refining it. This is where the thinking becomes a more concrete plan for action. This often means slowing down enough to check whether the ideas still stack up once the details are examined.

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Section 5.1 | Page 57

You and your service provider may need to:

- Review the Plan using the Tool and Workbook checklists and activities, to see where more detail or clarity is needed. The review process is intended to keep you on track and allows you to adjust course as conditions change.
- Crunch the numbers, including capital needs, timing, cash flow, labour peaks, and any new costs associated with new crops (e.g. certification, packaging, waste management).
- Seek specialist advice (e.g. financial, legal, agronomic, water, markets), so decisions are made with a solid understanding of all the implications.
- Revisit conversations with business partners or family members, especially where succession, shared finances, shared workload, or an exit from farming might also be part of the long-term picture.

Service providers play an ongoing role here. Diversification decisions rarely happen in a single meeting and imposing fixed timelines are rarely helpful, as you will often need several rounds of discussion and thinking time.


AdobeStock.com/barmalini

At this stage, the refined Plan should not feel final. Instead, it should feel more grounded and realistic than the first draft. This will provide you with a clearer path toward actionable next steps.

Steps to review and refine your Plan include:

1. Set a date to complete your **review** of the Farm Diversification Plan. This might be every six months, or more frequently. Consider:
   a. How many of the actions in the most recent annual priority table have you completed? Tick them off or add comments in your plan on a page.
   b. What are your next priorities? Are they still aligned with your planned future farm (check back on your vision and goals)?
2. Take your Plan to others for **feedback** (e.g. bank, other advisors, other growers).
3. In conjunction with step 1, start to build your **monitoring plan/process**. Some simple key performance indicators can be a great way to get started on helping you to track progress over time.

5.2 Using your Plan to guide change

You will have seen the reminders to 'Stop and Check!' throughout this Workbook. This process of continually reviewing the work you have done, and your assumptions, helps to build a sound transition and business plan. From now onwards, you might start to diversify your farm business. Scheduling regular check-ins with your service provider, accountant, banking institution or other relevant parties is a good way to keep you on track and accountable.

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Section 5.2 | Page 58

Remember to use your Plan! You spent the time developing it and it is there to guide you. You can adapt it as needed. Don't forget to refer to your vision and goals regularly and ask yourself:

> "Are my actions helping me to achieve the things I want to achieve?"

It can be useful to talk with your service provider about how you might **measure and track your progress**. There are lots of useful resources available online on monitoring and evaluating projects and processes (e.g. this information on the Monitoring, Evaluation, Reporting and Improvement (MERI) Framework). Setting some Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) can be a good start. These terms are in **Appendix 1: Financial terms explained**.



5.3 Where to find ongoing help and advice

5.3.1 Connect and learn from others

Diversification becomes easier when you can see what works in practice, hear honest stories and build a network of people you trust. Service providers can help create these opportunities in ways that feel less formal, more practical, and locally relevant.

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Figure 5.1 As your Diversification Plan takes shape, seek opportunities to get information and feedback wherever you can.



Peer to peer exchange

Honest conversations between growers are one of the strongest supports available. Shed talks, small group discussions and informal peer mentoring help growers reflect on what is possible and identify pitfalls to avoid. Many growers rely on 'phone a friend' relationships with trusted neighbours or friends, who are prepared to share what they have learned.



Seeing is believing

Site visits, case study farms, and demonstration trials offer growers the chance to see systems in action. Structured question and answer sessions, guided reflection, and follow-up conversations help people translate what they see into decisions they can use on their own farm.



Small group facilitated sessions, kitchen table conversations

These kinds of formats allow growers and service providers to work through checklists together, think aloud about finances or risk, and tackle the sensitive but important conversations around succession, exit or wellbeing.



Layered learning material

Short fact sheets, videos, podcasts and templates allow growers and service providers to keep learning between conversations. People learn in different ways, so diverse resources and useful. Linking these resources within the Guide offers a reliable, region-specific knowledge base.

5.3.2 Where to find ongoing support

Diversification requires a mixture of technical, business, and personal support. In most cases, this involves drawing on skills and expertise beyond a single organisation or person can provide.

You may already have valuable connections, both formal and informal (e.g. peers, advisors, suppliers, industry groups) that can offer guidance. Service providers can play a critical role in helping you to navigate this network and should encourage you to access a few different perspectives to check the information they are getting is accurate.

You can benefit from establishing a small, trusted support team that you can rely on. A well-structured support team will not only assist you in managing risks but also provides ongoing advice and encouragement.

5.3.3 Resources and networks

Table 5.1 outlines the types of service providers and community supports that you might choose to access as you plan farm diversification.

Table 5.2 lists rural financial counselling service providers who can help you look at your financial position and guide you towards additional advice and support to plan next steps.

Table 5.3 has details for the peak industry body groups across the three inland regions who can support and guide you.

Table 5.4 lists many of the industry associations that can offer support, information and guidance when considering a new crop option.

**Note that this information can change and become out of date. New information, initiatives and industry bodies can be formed. Use these tables as a guide but also do your own research when looking for networks and resources.*

Table 5.1 Service providers can support you in your plan to diversify

Role	What they do
FINANCIAL AND LEGAL ADVISORS	
Rural financial counsellors (RFC) (see Table 4.2 for details)	· Support growers under financial stress to assess options, budgets and exit pathways; · Government-funded via Rural Financial Counselling Service presence in the Riverina and Murray Valley; · Rural Business Support in the Riverland.
Rural bankers	· Provide refinance or restructure advice for viable farm businesses; · Employed by major agribusiness banks; · Often engage through grower associations or RFC referrals.
Accountants / legal or succession advisors	· Assist with tax, business structure, inheritance/estate and transition planning; · May have wide exposure to/examples of successful farm businesses; · Private regional firms; useful for (older) growers considering handover or sale/exit.
TECHNICAL AND PRODUCTION EXPERTS	
Respected neighbour	· Experienced grower of the new crop; · May share technical learnings/tips and potential pitfalls of developing new crop, establishment costs, intel on agents/pathways to market, access to key people/network; · May co-operate on use of machinery, aggregate crop for transport to market efficiencies.

(continued on next page)

Role	What they do
TECHNICAL AND PRODUCTION EXPERTS (*continued*)	
Reseller agronomists	· Advice on crop options, soil health and input planning; · Employed by agri-supply retailers; · Familiar technical contacts for Riverina and Riverland growers.
Extension or technical officers	· Translate research and market insights into on-ground advice; · Some from State Departments of Agriculture, University outreach/ project; · Some employed direct or contract by Peak Industry Bodies in each region. This includes the CCW Co-op Transformation and Innovation Officer in the Riverland.
Farm resilience, drought and climate advisors	· Help growers assess risks and build long-term plans for viability and adaptation; · Ad-hoc government or national resource management (NRM)-funded project roles, regionally based.
WATER AND RESOURCE MANAGERS	
Water corporation/trust or irrigation-scheme officers	· Advise on water-entitlement sales, leases and compliance; · Administer water accounts and delivery infrastructure (Central Irrigation Trust, Lower Murray Water, Murrumbidgee Irrigation).
BUSINESS AND MARKET ADVISORS	
Agribusiness consultants	· Guide growers through business analysis, supply chain options; · Ad-hoc, private or government-contracted advisors working regionally.
Economic, industry or regional development officers	· Facilitate structural adjustment and attract investment; · Employed by councils or regional development bodies (e.g. Regional Development Australia); · Administer funding programs, active regional transition planning. The CCW Co-op Transformation and Innovation Officer in the Riverland also covers this.
COMMUNITY AND WELLBEING SUPPORT	
Mental health and wellbeing workers	· Provide counselling and crisis support for growers in distress; · Government health service or charity/volunteer/NGO-based.
Community / farm resilience officers	· Coordinate social and recovery programs and link growers with local supports; · Employed by councils or recovery programs; · Active across all three regions but often on ad-hoc funding in response to crisis conditions.
INDUSTRY AND LEARNING NETWORKS	
Winegrape grower associations (see Table 4.2 for details)	· Represent and advocate for growers, provide communication and technical networks; · Usually member-funded.
Other grower associations (see Table 4.4 for details)	· Exist for many crop options, some are national representative associations (e.g. dried fruit, almonds). · Represent and advocate for growers, provide communication and technical networks. · Some of these groups are well functioning and effective/helpful, some are less effective

Table 5.2 Rural financial counselling services

REGION	ORGANISATION	WEBSITE
Riverland	Rural Business Support	www.ruralbusinesssupport.org.au
Murray Valley	RFCS Victoria West	wswrcs.com.au
	RFCS New South Wales	rfcsnsw-staging.jam-digital.com.au
Riverina	RFCS New South Wales	rfcsnsw.org.au/counsellors

Table 5.3 Peak industry bodies for winegrape

REGION	ORGANISATION	WEBSITE
Murray Valley	Murray Valley Winegrowers Inc.	www.mvwi.com.au
Riverina	Riverina Winegrape Growers	riverinawinegrapes.com.au
Riverland	Riverland Wine	riverlandwine.com.au

Table 5.4 Peak industry bodies for alternative crops

CROP	ORGANISATION	WEBSITE
Pistachios	Pistachio Grower's Association	www.pgai.com.au
Jujubes	South Australian Jujube Growers Association	www.australianjujubes.com.au
Dried fruits	Dried Fruits Australia	driedfruitsaustralia.org.au
Asparagus	Australian Asparagus Council	www.asparagus.com.au
Melon	Melons Australia	www.melonsaustralia.org.au
Carbon Farming	Clean Energy Regulator	cer.gov.au
Solar Panels	Clean Energy Council	cleanenergycouncil.org.au



5.3.4 Additional support

Transitioning or diversifying from winegrape growing can be complex and challenging. Beyond individual advisers, there are broader programs and organisations that can support you as you plan and implement change.

They can provide you with tools, training, business support, and wellbeing services so that you are not navigating transition alone. They also give service providers a clear network to draw on when you might need more than one kind of help.

Table 5.5 State-specific resources available as you plan farm diversification

PROGRAM	NSW	VIC	SA
Farm Business Resilience Program	Farm Business Resilience Program, DroughtHub NSW	Agriculture Victoria Farm Business Resilience Program	Wine Grape Council of SA Farm Business Resilience Program (GrowStrong)
Regional Development Australia (RDA)	RDA Riverina	RDA Murraylands and Riverlands	RDA Murraylands and Riverlands
Business management and development support	Family Business Association – courses available	Family Business Association – courses available	Family Business Association – courses available Family and Business (FaB) Mentors – a free service provided by PIRSA
Winegrape Grower Support			South Australia specific support for winegrape growers from PIRSA
Mental health and wellbeing services	National Centre for Farmer Health - NSW	National Centre for Farmer Health - Victoria	Drought Mental Health Support – SA National Centre for Farmer Health - South Australia

Table 5.6 National and general resources available as you plan farm diversification

AGENCY	PROGRAM
Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry (DAFF) and others	· Support for wine industry impacted by red grape oversupply · Various Australian Government Rural Support Initiatives
Business.gov.au	· Information on funding, permits, planning, and resources for small businesses, including farm enterprises.
Australian Wine Research Institute (AWRI)	· Guidance on 'resting' your vineyard – taking a year or two out from growing might give the grower time to reflect and reset before deciding to diversify, continue or exit.
Mental health and wellbeing services	· iFarmWell – mental health support and self-help tools for farmers and their families. · National Centre for Farmer Health (NCFH) – education, resources and support to help improve the health, wellbeing and safety of farmers and rural communities. With hubs in South Australia, Victoria, and New South Wales · Rural Aid – offer confidential phone or on-farm counselling; may also provide financial assistance, fodder, or water in emergencies. · TIACS (This Is A Conversation Starter) – free phone and text counselling for blue-collar workers, including farmers. · Rural Health Connect – a platform that links individuals in rural and regional areas to psychologists through phone or video calls.



Appendix 1: Financial terms explained

Capital Requirements (CAPEX)

The business case must identify all upfront investment costs, including major land preparation, irrigation and water infrastructure, crop establishment costs, machinery and post-harvest facilities. The cost estimates should be itemised where available and include contingency allowances. The funding structure including equity, debt and staged investment should be considered.

Operating Costs and Production Assumptions

A detailed understanding of annual operating costs is critical and includes labour, water, fertilisers, energy, packaging, freights and ongoing maintenance expenses.

Production assumptions must be evidence-based, outlining expected yields, packout rates, crop development timelines, and marketable volume.

Market and Revenue Outlook

The business case must consider expected sales prices, marketing channels, market access requirements and price variability. Revenue forecast must reflect seasonal pricing trends and potential volatility, especially for highly perishable crops as supply is weather-driven.

Financial Performance Modelling

A full cash flow model spans over a 10-year period, showing annual revenue, operating costs, capital depreciation, loan repayments and net cash position. The key financial metrics must be calculated including:

- Return on Investment (ROI)
- Net Present Value (NPV)
- Internal Rate of Return (IRR)
- Payback period.

This analysis is critical for lenders and investors assessing repayment capacity and financial resilience.

Sensitivity and Scenario Analysis

Sensitivity analysis is essential to understand the degree of financial exposure to changes in key assumptions. The business case should evaluate the impact of variations in yield, sale price, labour cost and interest rate to demonstrate whether the project remains viable under conservative or adverse conditions.

The sensitivity analysis should include at least three cases:

- Base case (most likely)
- Best case
- Worst case.

Management Capability and Resource

The business case should consider management capability and experience to ensure the project can be operationally delivered by the business. This includes management experience, technical support, and labour availability as financial lenders place significant emphasis on management capability.

Finance and Security Requirements

The business case should also consider the information required to secure funding such as historical statements, balance sheet positioning and debt servicing capacity. Also, evidence of market engagement strengthens confidence and supports loan approval.

Revenue and profitability

Revenue and profitability are core indicators of farm performance, showing how effectively the business converts production into financial return. Strong and consistent profitability provides the capacity to reinvest, manage debt, and withstand changing markets. Weak or declining profit margins signal structural challenges or emerging financial risk.

Cash flow

Cash flow is one of the most critical indicators of farm financial resilience. While profitability shows long-term performance, cash flow determines whether a business can meet day-to-day expenses, repay debt, and survive years with reduced income. For growers transitioning to a new crop, understanding cash flow requirements during establishment years is essential to avoid liquidity pressure and financial stress.

Debt-serviceability and risk

Debt-serviceability and risk assessment determine whether the business can reliably meet loan repayments and withstand financial shocks. Evaluating repayment capacity under different scenarios provides confidence that the enterprise can manage debt even during periods of lower income or increased costs. This is critical when considering new investments or diversification.

Investment suitability

Assessing your investment suitability involves a process of reviewing the farm's current assets to understand their appropriateness for new enterprises. This process highlights opportunities to leverage existing resources and identifies areas requiring further investment to support diversification.

Provenance

When talking about provenance regarding your business, this relates to the details around the journey of the goods you produce. Consumers want to know that what they are buying is authentic, of quality and ethical. Sharing your provenance story is useful in marketing and building a customer base.

Market pull

Market pull means genuine ongoing demand for the product amongst the target buyer group, rather than you or your agent trying to create demand for the product among buyers via marketing, special deals or price cutting.

Key Performance Indicators (KPIs)

KPIs are measurable values that are used to evaluate the success of your operations, financial health and environmental sustainability. They help you to track progress, identify areas that need improvement, and make decisions based on meaningful data. KPIs feed into your overarching monitoring framework and approach.

Monitoring, Evaluation, Reporting and Improvement (MERI) Framework

The MERI Framework is an adaptive management approach to monitoring and evaluation. It enables continuous participation, communication and improvement which helps to work towards desired outcomes. MERI helps you to identify what needs to be improved.



