

## Learnings from a visit to the Margaret River wine region

Sara attended the Australian Regional Tourism Network Convention in Margaret River in October 2013. The conference provided the opportunity to meet with Regional Tourism Organisations and State Tourism Organisation representatives from around the country to benchmark the activity being undertaken, challenges of the industry and funding models in place.

During the convention, key observations regarding the Margaret River wine region were gathered and have been compiled into a brief key learning overview for industry.

### Key trend observations from Margaret River:

Area	Observation
<b>Tour activation</b>	In a region similar in size to the North East and similar in distance from a major centre Margaret River has literally dozens of tours of the region available at various price points on a daily basis. Many of these tours integrated winery and brewery visits with nature based experiences.
<b>Family friendly at the next level</b>	Investment in family friendly aspects of the Cellar Door offering are highly visible with multiple properties delivering exceptional family friendly elements and their visitation seemed to reflect this. Most of the activities available were simple in their execution but highly visible. The overall breadth of family friendly elements within the region was well promoted by the VIC and in tourism collateral.
<b>Co-location at Cellar doors</b>	Cellar doors as stand-alone entities were few and far between with either sub businesses of a diversified nature or unique businesses partnering with co-location at a single site with significant dedicated facilities for each. Examples were: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- wine and nougat making</li> <li>- wine and specialty chocolate</li> <li>- wine and art gallery</li> <li>- wine and brewery</li> <li>- wine and olive oil/soap making facilities</li> </ul>
<b>Street presence</b>	Even quite modest businesses in the regional setting had invested in significant street presence through use of sculpture, signage and creativity. Businesses worked hard to tempt their visitors off the main route and to differentiate their business.