

NEXT GENERATION VITICULTURE

Public Summary – March 2026

Summary of progress during this period

The Next Generation Viticulture (NGV) Programme made strong progress during Quarter 3 as the season moved from late-summer monitoring into harvest. Across seven trial sites, the team completed end-of-season canopy assessments and maintained regular grape maturity sampling to support consistent harvest decisions and build a comparable dataset across sites and training systems.

Harvest began in early March, and the programme commenced its 2026 winemaking trials. The Bragato Research Institute (BRI) winery processed and analysed over 1,300 samples for key juice measures (including sugar, acidity and pH), and initiated fermentation of trial wines so that vineyard treatments can later be compared for wine composition and sensory attributes.

At several trial sites, the six-vertical cordon (6V) training system produced higher yields (up to 38% above the standard system at some sites) while still reaching similar juice sugar levels at harvest. This season, the different training systems were generally harvested within less than a week of each other, which is an important practical outcome for commercial vineyard operations. A small number of sites did not show a yield uplift this year, and these will be reviewed in detail with growers and technical advisors to understand what factors (such as establishment and winter pruning) may be influencing performance.

The programme also continued to use vineyard sensors and field measurements to improve understanding of how different training systems influence vine water status and canopy performance. Any practical issues encountered with data capture and sampling logistics were addressed during the quarter and will be used to strengthen protocols for the next growing season.

The vineyard and winery datasets collected this quarter contribute to the programme's longer-term objectives to lift productivity while improving input efficiency (for example, water and spray use per tonne of fruit).

Key highlights and achievements

- **Vineyard activities:** End-of-season canopy measurements were completed across the trial network, alongside ongoing maturity sampling to support harvest timing and treatment comparisons.
- **Harvest progress:** Six of the seven trial sites were harvested by the end of March, with remaining harvest activity scheduled early in the following quarter.
- **Winemaking trials:** Trial winemaking began for the 2026 vintage, with multiple treatment replicates underway to enable robust comparisons of wine composition and sensory outcomes later in the year.
- **Engagement:** A public workshop was held in March and the programme continued to engage growers, scientists, suppliers and students through trial site visits and communications resources.

Upcoming focus areas

- **Vineyard Activities:** Complete remaining harvest activities, compile and quality-check harvest and maturity datasets, and commence dormant vine measurements to support the next season's planning.
- **Winery Activities:** Continue fermentation monitoring, then stabilise, filter and bottle trial wines in preparation for laboratory testing and sensory evaluation.
- **Data analysis:** Analyse Year 2 viticulture results (including yield and harvest timing) to understand where canopy system performance is strongest and where further improvements are needed.
- **Engagement:** Deliver winter pruning-focused engagement activities and continue development of grower-ready resources to support adoption and understanding of NGV systems.

Investment

Investment period Y2 Qtr3	Industry contribution	In-kind contribution	MPI contribution	Total investment
During this quarter	\$ 132,840	\$ 76,915	\$ 139,837	\$ 349,591
Programme to date	\$ 1,343,506	\$329,627	\$ 1,115,422	\$ 2,788,555