

Hi-tech boost for McLaren Vale tourism data

TECHNOLOGY

Technology originally developed to monitor urban traffic has been adapted to count the number of visitors to the McLaren Vale wine region.



Damian Hewitt, General Manager, Transport at SAGE Automation; Jeremy Maxwell, General Manager, Maxwell Wines; Jennifer Lynch, General Manager, McLaren Vale Grape Wine & Tourism Association

SAGE Automation has partnered with McLaren Vale Grape Wine & Tourism Association to deliver the technology solution that will provide wine region specific data in real time.

The McLaren Vale region 40km south of Adelaide, South Australia is home to more than 80 wineries. But unlike many other regions that align with their own statistical tourism area, McLaren Vale's visitor numbers are included in the greater Fleurieu

region in which it sits, making it difficult to accurately measure and report specific wine tourism metrics.

Utilising technology originally developed to monitor Adelaide's traffic network for the South Australian Department of Transport, Planning and Infrastructure, [SAGE Automation](#) developed a dashboard system to report metrics collected by fifteen solar-powered beacon units installed across the McLaren Vale Geographical Indication (GI).

The SAGE Bluetooth detection units work by sensing the unique MAC address of smart devices. A MAC address is assigned to every Bluetooth and Wi-Fi chip produced in the world.

The solar powered beacons can correlate detections of uniquely identified visitors carrying a smart device within a 50-70m radius. The unit does not capture personally identifiable information, nor requires any input or action from the visitor or business.

Data collected by the beacons is reported in real-time to a dashboard displaying an estimate of visitors to a location at a particular time, as well as an estimate of the number of visits per site over time and peak times.

SAGE Automation is based in the [Tonsley Innovation Precinct](#) in suburban Adelaide and specialises in industrial automation design, delivery and support.

It is the first time that the South Australian company's technology will be used in a tourism context.

SAGE Automation General Manager of Transport Damian Hewitt said the collaboration between the two businesses would provide many benefits to the region.

"McLaren Vale Grape Wine & Tourism Association has shown real leadership in adapting the use of the technology to maximise the economic benefit to their members," he said.

"This type of technology is the foundation for using artificial intelligence that will lead to significant community benefit.

"These benefits could include efficient staff rostering, co-ordinating transit between locations and encouraging the promotion of tourism events."

McLaren Vale Grape Wine & Tourism Association General Manager Jennifer Lynch said accurate visitation data helped wineries provide exceptional tourism experiences

and inform business decisions.

“The application of this data insight will enable a greater understanding of McLaren Vale’s tourism landscape and visitor economy,” she said.

“The collected tourism data is critical in informing business decision making, grant applications, biosecurity regulations as well as infra, soft and superstructure developments and long-term planning – both at a regional and individual business level.”

The Geolocation Project will run as a pilot for 12 months.

Known for its premium Shiraz and Grenache, McLaren Vale is Australia’s fifth largest wine region by value, producing grapes with an estimated value of \$58 million in 2019. It is home to several world-renowned brands including Hardys, Wirra Wirra and d’Arenberg.



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