



The Barossa Council



GRAPEVINE, TEXAS

Our Sister City

Delegation Report –
September 2025

BACKGROUND

Following the signing of the intention to enter into a Sister City Accord with the City of Grapevine, Texas during their visit in April 2023, Mayor Bim Lange, Jo Moen, Acting CEO - The Barossa Council, Scott Hazeldine, CEO Barossa Australia, and a delegation of Barossa Winemakers travelled to the City of Grapevine, Texas from 12th to 18th of September 2023 to attend GrapeFest which facilitated the official signing of a Sister City Accord between the two local government entities.

Since then, Council has proactively established a Sister Cities Advisory Committee (the Committee) pursuant to Section 41 of the *Local Government 1999*. Council then appointed the member representatives to the Sister Cities Advisory Committee on 20 February 2024, consisting of a diverse group of representatives from education, economic development, events, service clubs, community development and business owners.

The Sister City relationship is based on an alignment of our core values, with both cities incredibly passionate about preserving and upholding character, traditions and cultural identity. We are also equally aspirational about our future and the ways in which we can innovate and diversify to maintain our international brand and build a region that is vibrant, sustainable and owns its place in a global marketplace.

Delegates attended the City of Grapevine, Texas from 9th to 16th of September to attend GrapeFest 2025:

- Mayor Bim Lange
- Martin McCarthy - CEO The Barossa Council
- Janine Harding - Sister Cities Program Manager
- Rolf Binder & Louise Hickinbotham - Sister Cities Advisory Committee Members
- Amber Perry - Barossa's Young Ambassador for 2025
- 8 Nuriootpa High School agriculture students and 2 teachers

A comprehensive itinerary of events, site visits and networking opportunities were curated for The Barossa Council Delegation over the seven day visit providing an opportunity to develop key relationships with City of Grapevine Council Officials, Staff, Business Leaders, representatives from Rotary, Volunteer Groups, the Education Sector and the Tourism industry, Texas government officials and sister city delegates from Scotland and Mexico to provide a platform for conversations and collaborations in the pursuit of education, tourism, trade, cultural and innovation outcomes.

In addition to key contacts made with Texas stakeholders, Barossa's delegates also capitalised on the opportunity to establish strong connections with delegates attending Grapefest from the City of Grapevine's other sister cities including West Lothian, Scotland and Parras de la Fuente, Mexico.

Representatives from Barossa Australia and the contingent of Barossa Wineries were also afforded a range of media, education, networking and promotional opportunities as a result of being showcased as a featured wine region at GrapeFest 2025.

CITY OF GRAPEVINE SUMMARY



Grapevine, Texas established in 1844 is in the northeast Tarrant County of Texas. It's known for its restored 19th- and 20th-century buildings and authentic Texas charm.

The City represents the best of what Texas has to offer: a thriving historic downtown, an active and vibrant community, fantastic shopping, dining, and entertainment, and a coveted school district in the center of one of the fastest-growing metropolitan areas in the country. Grapevine sits in the center of the Dallas-Fort Worth (DFW) metroplex with direct access to seven major highways as well as DFW International Airport and the TEXRail commuter line, providing unparalleled connection to Fort Worth now and Dallas by 2024.

Grapevine uses a council-manager government, consisting of an elected city council, composed of the mayor and six at-large council members, with a city manager appointed by the council. Mayor William D Tate is the current Mayor and Mr Bruno Rumbelow is the City Manager.

In addition to services traditionally managed by local government in South Australia, The City of Grapevine also manages water supply, housing, birth and death certificates, municipal court services, and emergency services.

The City of Grapevine Community Profile

The City of Grapevine Estimated Resident Population is 51,454, across 22,637 households.

The City of Grapevine's median age is 37.81, the median household income is \$115,468 USD (\$177,475 AUD), and the unemployment rate is approximately 2.9%.

The city has a total labour force of 33,395 with an average commute time of 23 minutes and access to one of the nation's top passenger & cargo airports.

- ★ Host to Dallas Fort Worth International (DFW) Airport -2,000 plus daily flights around the globe and within four hours of any city in the US, and Canada.
 - ★ 10 minutes from DFW International Airport to Historic Downtown.
 - ★ Over 15 million visitors per year.
 - ★ 20 hotels, over 6000 hotel rooms & suites and 1 million square feet of meeting space.
 - ★ 30 plus boutiques/shops on historic main street and 200 plus restaurants.
 - ★ 20 plus cultural sites and attractions and 8,000 acres of fun on Lake Grapevine.
-

Location and Boundaries

Grapevine is a city located in northeast Tarrant County, Texas, United States, with minor portions extending into Dallas County and Denton County. The city is located in the Mid-Cities suburban region between Dallas and Fort Worth and includes a larger portion of Dallas/Fort Worth International Airport than other cities.

The City of Grapevine has a total area of 35.9 square miles (93 km²), of which 32.3 sq mi (84 km²) are land and 3.6 sq mi (9.3 km²) are covered by water.

Name Origin

The City takes its name from the wild mustang grapes that grew abundantly across the area.

Settlement History

In October 1843, General Sam Houston and fellow Republic of Texas Commissioners camped at Tah-Wah-Karro Creek, also known as Grape Vine Springs, to meet with leaders of 10 Indian nations. This meeting culminated in the signing of a treaty of "peace, friendship, and commerce," which opened the area for homesteaders. The settlement that emerged was named Grape Vine due to its location on the appropriately named Grape Vine Prairie near Grape Vine Springs, both names in homage to the wild grapes that grew in the area. Grapevine is the oldest settlement in Tarrant County, dating back to 1844 when Texas was a republic before statehood in 1845.

The first recorded white settlement in what would become the modern city occurred in the late 1840s and early 1850s. General Richard Montgomery Gano owned property near Grape Vine and helped organize the early settlement against Comanche raiding parties before leading his band of volunteers to battle in the American Civil War. Growth during the 19th century was slow but steady; by 1890, Grape Vine had about 800 residents supported by such amenities as a newspaper, a public school, several cotton gins, a post office, and railroad service. The settlement made continued gains early in the 20th century and on January 12, 1914, the post office altered the town's name to one word: Grapevine.

On Easter Sunday, April 1, 1934, Henry Methvin, an associate of Bonnie Parker and Clyde Barrow, killed two police officers, E.B. Wheeler, and H.D. Murphy, during an altercation near Grapevine.

Grapevine's population fell during the interwar period, as the economy stagnated, though the city was officially incorporated in 1936. Cotton was the primary crop for Grapevine until the early 20th century when it was overtaken by cantaloupe farms that accounted for 25,000 acres.

For several decades, until the early 1970s, the Rotary Club sign outside of town boasted Grapevine as the "Cantaloupe Capital of the World". Population growth and economic gains resumed to some extent in the decades after World War II. The opening of Dallas Fort Worth International Airport in 1974 spurred massive development. Grapevine depended heavily upon agricultural production prior to the mid-20th century but transformed into a regional center of commerce because of its proximity to the airport's north entrance.

In recent years, several wineries have opened in Grapevine, and the city has been active in maintaining its historic downtown corridor.

Economy

Grapevine's economy is largely centered around travel and tourism, although those sectors also promote strong growth in other areas such as entertainment, retail trade, and transportation. Travelers arriving to and departing from Dallas/Fort Worth International Airport make up the majority of the city's visitors. The Gaylord Texan and Great Wolf Lodge are the two biggest hotels in Grapevine and among the biggest in the Metroplex. The hotels also have large convention centres and entertainment venues. In 2020, Coury Hospitality launched Hotel Vin, a new boutique hotel attached to the recently finished TEXRail station.

Nearby Grapevine Mills Mall is a regional outlet shopping center with many amenities, including a movie theatre. Embassy Suites Grapevine and the DFW Lakes Hilton complex also lay adjacent to Grapevine Mills and Bass Pro Shops.

In addition to these areas, Main Street in historic downtown Grapevine is a popular attraction. Public amenities like City Hall, the Grapevine Convention and Visitor's Bureau, the city library, public parks, and a recreation center are located on Main Street, nestled in between a wealth of small businesses. These include antique stores, restaurants, bars, theatres, and many specialty shops. The Grapevine Vintage Railroad follows a historic route between Grapevine and the Fort Worth Stockyards, departing from a station on South Main Street. The city is also the home of several wineries and tasting rooms including Umbra Winery as well as the Texas Wine and Grape Growers Association.

According to the City's 2024 Annual Comprehensive Financial Report, the city's top employers are:

#	Employer	# of Employees
1	Dallas Fort Worth International Airport	2110
2	Gaylord Texan Resort	2000
3	Grapevine Colleyville Independent School District	1830
4	Paycom	1180
5	Baylor Medical	660
6	Great Wolf Lodge	600
7	City of Grapevine	590
8	Kubota	520
9	Boeing Distribution	500
10	Hyatt Regency DFW	500

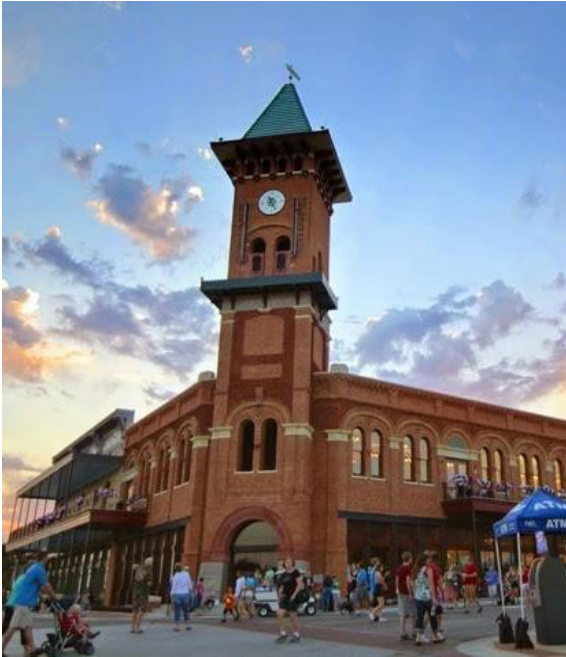
Sister Cities

-  [Krems an der Donau](#), Austria (since 1999)
 -  [Parras de la Fuente](#), Mexico (since 1996)
 -  [Linlithgow, West Lothian](#), Scotland (since 2008)
 -  [The Barossa Council](#), Australia (since 2023)
-

PROGRAM

Day 1 - Tuesday, 9 September 2025

Flight Arrival at Dallas Fort Worth Airport – 4.30pm

Activity	Notes
Grapevine Convention & Visitors Bureau – Meet & greet of the Study Tour Host families.	The Grapevine Convention & Visitors Bureau is wholly managed under the City Council Governance structure and acts as the promotional arm of the City of Grapevine and is responsible for actively selling, marketing and promoting Grapevine globally. The Bureau promotes the city's hotels, meeting facilities, historic and family attractions, festivals and events, dining establishments and retail businesses to the group meetings and leisure markets.   Nuriootpa High School Study Tour students with Host Family Colleyville students on arrival.

Day 2 - Wednesday, 10 September 2025

Activity	Notes
Grapevine's Historic Main Street	 Main Street banner including SA Flag
Tour City Hall & Council Chambers with Deputy City Manager, Jennifer Hibbs	Delegates met and received presentations from a range of executive staff including planning, corporate services and finance, Chief of Police, Fire Chief, marketing and media, toured the City Hall and the Mayor's Office and met with Deputy City Manager Jennifer Hibbs. Grapevine, TX - Official Website Official Website (grapevinetexas.gov)     Mayor Tate's office Grapevine Council Chambers

Peace Circle

The Peace Circle Is an interpretation of a moment in time of a meeting of Republic of Texas President Sam Houston and 10 American Indian chiefs/captains on the Grape Vine Prairie in 1843. The work of public art features 11 bronze statues standing 1.25 percent larger than life size, representing Republic of Texas President Sam Houston and American Indian chiefs/captains from the Delaware, Chickasaw, Waco, Tawakoni, Keechi, Caddo, Anadarko, Ioni, Biloxi and Cherokee Nations.



Three of the Peace Circle statues

Grapevine Observation Tower and Harvest Hall

Located in Historic Downtown Grapevine, the 42,000-square-foot rail station consists of Harvest Hall, a European-style food hall with seven globally-inspired kitchens; Third Rail, an indoor/outdoor entertainment and event venue; 38,000-square-foot expansive outdoor Plaza; and a 150-foot-tall Observation Tower with 360-degree views of the city and beyond all connected to Hotel Vin, a six-story, 120-room Marriott and a 552-space parking garage.



View of Main Street from the tower



One of the Visitor Information counters



Grapevine Rotary Meeting and Luncheon.

Barossa was warmly welcomed by the Grapevine Texas Rotary Club who are a key partner in the Grapevine Sister City Program. Mayor Bim Lange made a presentation to Grapevine Rotary Club on behalf of James Dunn, President of Rotary Club of Barossa Valley.



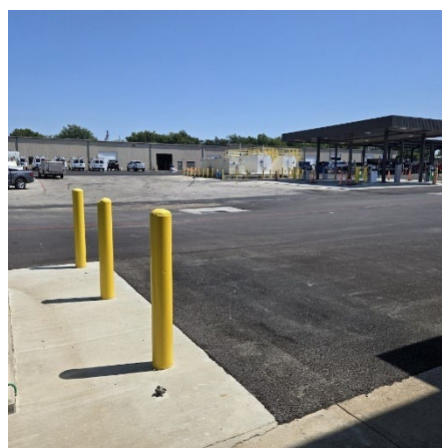
Judge Bill Brandt & Mayor Lange

Tour the Grapevine Service Centre with Public Works Director, Bryan Beck

The center sustained damage during a tornado in Dec 2013. About 95 city employees were displaced after the building had damage to its interior walls, furniture, computers and water damage. Public Works's new facility (2021), consolidates several departments; water, wastewater, streets, and fleet maintenance with new fleet maintenance bays, office, space for storing materials & equipment.



Staff making street signs



Tour of Dove Park Pickleball Courts & Casey's Clubhouse

A community park with inclusive, wheelchair-accessible play structures and adaptive equipment. The playground includes separate areas for toddlers and older children, a rubberised play surface in most areas, bathrooms, and a large, shaded pavilion. This special playground was inspired by a little girl, Casey, and her dream to play with the other children.



Nuriootpa High School Study Tour

Oak Grove Sports Complex

A multi-field regional complex with batting cages, baseball fields, and softball fields with a shady playground, picnic area, comfortable stadium seating, and a concession stand. Both the park and the play area are handicap accessible. Oak Grove Baseball Complex is an award-winning baseball/softball complex.



Tour Historic Nash Farm

Delegates and students learnt about Grapevine and the city's heritage by visiting Nash Farm. Purchased by Thomas Jefferson Nash in 1859, this historic landmark brings history to life through exhibits, interpretive programs and touchable displays.



Nuriootpa High School Study Tour & Council delegates

Welcome Dinner at Farina's Winery and Cafe

Farina's Winery and Café is located within the festival district and while Barossa delegates networked with Grapevine City Staff and Sister City Representatives. We were able to watch Council staff and volunteers facilitate Festival set up.

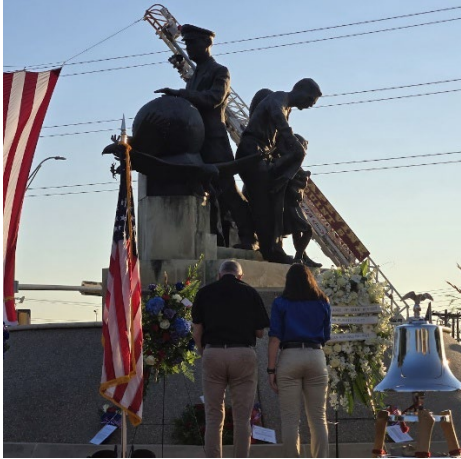


Mayor Lara from Parras, Mexico, Mayor Lange and Grapevine's Mayor Tate



Amber Perry, spoke of her experiences and role as ambassador for our region.

Day 3 - Thursday, 11 September 2025

Activity	Notes
9/11 Remembrance Ceremony	Delegate's attendance at the 9/11 Remembrance Ceremony at the Grapevine memorial. Mayor Bim Lange and Nuriootpa High School's, Miyu Endersby were honored to lay a wreath on the Barossa's behalf, to remember those who died and reflect on the bravery of first responders.   Amber Perry & Mayor Lange
Tour of Sister City Friendship Hall	The Barossa Council's honorary wall within the City of Grapevine's Sister City Friendship Hall. Barossa was represented along with Krems, Austria, West Lothian, Scotland and Parras, Mexico.   Louise Hickinbotham – Barossa's Sister Cities Committee Member
Mayor's Brunch Reception Honoring GrapeFest Sponsors	A reception held to 'kick off' Grapefest and to acknowledge and thank the sponsors and volunteers supporting the event.  Three Mayors and Rolf Binder Barossa's Sister Cities Committee Member

39th Annual GrapeFest, A Texas Wine Experience

Delegates were able to spend time experience the Grapefest' Event on Main Street. The 39th annual GrapeFest saw more than 200,000 wine lovers gather in Grapevine, Texas to celebrate all things vino.

Grapevine's historic Main Street was closed to traffic for the four-day event, which included wine tasting, charcuterie and candle-making workshops, live music, festival food, live entertainment, market stalls and GrapeStomp competitions

Barossa's presence showcased regional collaboration and diversity, with wines poured by: **Two Hands Wines, Yalumba, Pewsey Vale, Elderton, Hewitson, Stage Door Wine Co., Kalleske Wines** and **Lambert Estate** (represented by Vanesa Lambert).



Sister City Friendship Dinner at The REC's Stewart Hall

Delegates enjoyed a networking dinner with key city staff, Elected Members, volunteers and families. The evening also gave opportunities to network with Grapevine Sister City Committee Members and delegates from Mexico and Scotland. Entertainment was provided by Grapevine Colleyville Heritage High School – dance group, the Panteras.



Day 4 - Friday, 12 September 2025

Activity	Notes
Colleyville Heritage High School tour and pep rally	Both Nuriootpa High School Study Tour students, their teachers and the Barossa delegates joined in the excitement of a Traditional Texas High School Pep Rally. Followed by a guided tour of school district facilities to include: Technology, Education & Career Center (TECC), Agricultural Facilities, Multipurpose Activity Centre, (MAC) and Mustang-Panther Stadium and more.   The School has donated and sent American Football playing gear to the Adelaide American Football League.    

Lunch with Grapevine-Colleyville Independent School District Superintendent, Brad Schnautz, and teachers	Nuriootpa High school students and teachers, along with the Council delegation had lunch at Cracker Barrel with the Grapevine-Colleyville Independent School District Superintendent, Brad Schnautz, and teachers - Stephanie Speaks - Director of Career and Technical Education & Charity McConnell - Coordinator of Career and Technical Education. 
Guided tour of Kubota Tractor Headquarters - facilities and lab	Kubota is proud to support the National Farmers Federation of America. The tour included presentations on the organisation, its community and educational support programs and commitment to innovation and environmental sustainability.  
Mustang Panther Stadium Panthers Football game	Nuriootpa High school students and teachers, along with the Council delegation attended a High School Football game. The entertainment was provided by the schools themselves, from music, band, dancers, cheerleaders, batons etc.  

Day 5 - Saturday, 13 September 2025

Activity	Notes
Grape Stomp	Mayor Lange and CEO, Martin McCarthy participated in the 2025 Mayoral GrapeStomp competition for the 3 Sister Cities. The competition, featuring costumes from each country, was a great opportunity to build festival goers interest in Australia and more specifically the Barossa, with our Aussie Cricketers being a major hit with the crowds.  Mayor Lange & CEO, Martin McCarthy   Amber Perry working with our wineries - International Wine Tent
The Grape Gatsby Soiree Event	"Grapefest Grape Gatsby" was the theme of the 39th Annual GrapeFest wine festival in Grapevine. The theme celebrated the 100th anniversary of The Great Gatsby with a Roaring Twenties atmosphere, including art deco designs and a "Grape Gatsby" Champagne Terrace. The event featured wine tastings, live music, food, and family-friendly activities.   Nuri High School Study Tour lads & host family

Day 6 - Sunday, 14 September 2025

Venue	Notes
Grapevine Vintage Railroad to the Fort Worth Stockyards	All the Barossa delegation climbed aboard the Grapevine Vintage Railroad, authentic 1920s-era luxury coaches that carry the spirit of a bygone age and experienced a ride through the heart of Grapevine, Texas. As the train chugged along the Historic Cotton Belt Route, landing in Fort Worth Stockyards featuring Western heritage museums, live music, rodeos, cattle drives, shopping and dining.   Mayor Lange with the entertainers on the train  

Day 7 - Monday, 15 September 2025

Venue	Notes
Hosted 'free time' by Jan & Dennis Luers and Duff O'Dell	The Grapevine Sister City Committee Members, Jan and Dennis Luers and Council Member, Duff O'Dell, kindly took the Council delegates 'out and about' seeing road infrastructure, hotels, the Lakes and visits to a few shops.    Esparza's Restaurant  Mayor Lange and Louise Hickinbotham
Farewell Dinner	The Council delegates were farewelled by City Officials, Council Members, Sister City Committee Members with thank you and acknowledgement speeches.  PW McCallam, Amber Perry, Mayor Tate and Mayor Lange 

Day 8 - Tuesday, 16 September 2025

Flight Departure at Dallas Fort Worth Airport at 7.30pm

Venue	Notes
Meow Wolf Grapevine - The Real Unreal	Meow Wolf Grapevine's The Real Unreal is an immersive, explorable art and entertainment wonderland located in the heart of the Dallas-Fort Worth metroplex. 
AT&T Stadium – Dallas Cowboys Tour	The Nuriootpa High School Study Tour and Council delegates were treated to a special 'behind the scenes' tour of AT & T Stadium, home of the Dallas Cowboys.  
Dinner and Games at Chicken N Pickle – Fond Farewells	 

STUDY TOUR

(*from their socials)

Day 1

We are beyond 'grapeful' for the warm welcome from host families and for the Barossa Council's Sister City partnership with the City of Grapevine Texas Government.

Day 2

Before lunch we spent the morning at **Grapevine High School**. We kicked off with breakfast alongside the school leadership team, then jumped into some incredible agriculture classes. We learned about making mums for homecoming, tried our hand at metal work for ag, and even did a scavenger hunt where we sampled all sorts of American snacks and drinks.

Meeting the barn animals and exploring the ag facilities was a huge highlight. The passion here for agriculture is contagious. A personal highlight for Miss Hoffmann during the school visit was meeting the class pet Gary the chinchilla!

We also got to see basketball practice and experience the school cafeteria, which was such a different vibe to back home in Australia.

We were blown away by the entrepreneurial businesses run by Grapevine High students. We were even lucky enough to buy some drip from their merchandise store The Outpost which is run entirely by students. So cool!

In the afternoon we headed out on a tour of Grapevine's historic and community sites including the Peace Plaza, Treaty of Peace Circle, the Observation Tower, Dove Park Pickleball Courts, Casey's Clubhouse all-abilities playground and the Historic Nash Farm.

A MASSIVE shoutout to the ag teachers and staff at Grapevine High. Y'all are legends! Your passion and energy for your students is amazing and we feel so lucky to be welcomed into your world.

Day 3

Yesterday began with a significant and emotional moment as Miyu, alongside Barossa Mayor Bim Lange, proudly laid a wreath at the 9/11 Remembrance Ceremony. The Grapevine memorial is a place of reflection honouring those lost and the bravery of first responders. It was such a powerful and special moment to be part of.

From there we explored the Sister City Friendship Hall, toured T.V. Munson Viticulture and Entomology Centre, grabbed lunch at Macalester's, and even found our new favourite stop, Buc-ee's!

Dinner brought the best surprise with the Colleyville dance team welcoming us in followed by a tour of the REC and Senior Centre with Chris Smith and Trenton Kelley. Decked out in Texas outfits, our students sowed the seeds of friendship with host siblings, plenty of laughs, and of course the Nutbush!

Our host siblings summed it up:

- ❤ Reese: "My highlight was going to the 9/11 memorial and honouring those who lost their lives."
- 💛 Liv: "My favourite part was being able to spend time with the Aussies and build good relationships :)"

From teaching the dance team to taking centre stage - our Study Tour legends brought Aussie spirit to the pep rally with the Nutbush

Day 4

Today our Study Tour legends took part in GrapeFest Grape Stomp and took on their leaders, Team Old

Skool (Mr Lane & Miss Hoffmann). The competition was fierce, but Old Skool managed to take out the win over the reigning champs Riley & Nick — by just a smidge! In the second heat, our crew battled it out with their Grapevine host siblings. The O2 team of Olivia's took the crown, winning by just 2oz (59.147ml)! A seriously solid effort from everyone.

We're loving every minute of GrapeFest and are looking forward to a big day tomorrow at the Stock Yards, taking the heritage train, and finishing it all off with the rodeo!

Day 5

After a dashing dinner in the roaring 20s the night before last, our crew spent all day yesterday exploring the **Fort Worth Stockyards Stables**! Of course, we couldn't resist stopping in the shops for a few souvenirs along the way.

We kicked things off by taking the heritage vintage railway train from Grapevine to Fort Worth — which was a hoot! Along the way we learned about the famous Texas Longhorn and even got to see a Longhorn cattle drive.

Joke of the day: Why do they put a bell on the first bull? Because the horn don't work! Thanks to Mexican Independence Day, we were lucky enough to soak up the vibrant Mexican culture of Texas and even enjoy a traditional Mexican rodeo!

Of course, we cannot thank our Barossa Council enough for their Sister City relationship with Grapevine, Texas. Grapevine also shares a Sister City relationship with Mexico, which made the celebrations even more special.

What a day it was. Now we're looking forward to the last couple of adventures before we head home.

Day 6

Yesterday we spent time at "the Purple Tractor" and the Agriculture, Food & Natural Resources area of Tarleton State University. We loved learning about Texas agriculture and checking out their processing facility, livestock barns, dairy, equine centre, greenhouse and more!

Fun fact: Tarleton's College of Agriculture & Natural Resources has over 2,500 students and offers hands-on programs like Meat & Food Science and Ranch Management. The Purple Tractor itself is a student-run teaching lab where fresh meats, produce, and nursery plants are sold — pretty agmazing!

Lunch was a student-made BBQ brisket feast which was delicious and banana pudding! Afterward we popped into a thrift store where Mr Lane found some gems and we grabbed Tarleton merch. Bonus highlight: we even saw a squirrel! A special shoutout to our host teachers, Mr Durr and Mrs Moore, who are proud Tarleton alumni and of course agmazing.

That evening we joined the Grapevine-Colleyville FFA chapter meeting to thank our host families, then rounded out the night with some kickball (the Aussies were too busy kicking butt to get pics). Our last day was amazing and a little bittersweet

We kicked things off with what has now become a new staple... Starbucks before wandering the beautiful Botanic Gardens. Then it was time for some fun at Meow Woof (the coolest interactive art piece ever!), followed by a spot of shopping where we even had our hats shaped.

From there we made our way to Arlington for a VIP tour of AT&T Stadium. While we didn't get to meet any of the DCC or Branden Aubrey, we had an incredible time soaking in such an impressive place! The afternoon wrapped up with some Chicken N Pickle and a few tears as we said goodbye to our agmazing host families.

Thank you to our host families for welcoming us in with open arms, and to the Barossa Council for the Sister City relationship with Grapevine, Texas that made this all possible.

We're not sad it's over, we're happy it happened. What an honour to represent our community, build life-long friendships, and share this unforgettable experience. We can't wait for y'all to visit us in the Barossa!

***As the philosopher Winnie the Pooh once said:
"How lucky I am to have something that makes saying goodbye so hard."***

They've met so many wonderful people, soaking up new experiences, and yesterday they leapt into the incredible AT&T Stadium a true dream come true for our students and teachers.

A huge thank you to the Barossa Council for their ongoing support and for building such a strong sister city relationship with Grapevine, Texas.



Thank you to the Barossa Community who made all this possible and for the following sponsors:



Thank you!

BAROSSA YOUNG AMBASSADOR

What an incredible opportunity!

I cannot thank everyone involved enough for allowing me the opportunity to visit our Sister City in Grapevine, Texas

I was able to head over to Grapevine for their annual 'Grapefest', a celebration of all things wine and community.

A jam packed 4 days of learning, tasting and connecting.

The opportunity to be involved in this experience holds a very special place in my heart. Not only have I made international connections I have deepened those connections within my own community. For this I am forever grateful. I hope to continue to learn more and expand my horizon into our diverse culture.

A big thank you to the City of Grapevine and many, many others. Because of their endless work I was able to see behind the scenes action of Grapefest, make connections and experience none other than Texan Hospitality.

I hope to bring all these experiences back to better myself, my career and all things Barossa.

I can't wait to get back home and start new conversations with new and old friends and help continue to promote our wonderful home The Barossa Valley in all its cultural heritage and fantastic wine!

Thank you to The Barossa Council, City of Grapevine and everyone else far and wide who made this possible.

Thank you for your tireless work and everyone at The Barossa Council and everyone involved with the Barossa Young Ambassadors Program and Barossa Vintage Festival - thank you.

A trip of a lifetime!



GRAPEVINE VISIT – KEY TAKEAWAYS

Summary

During the September 2025 visit to Grapevine, Texas, Council's delegates developed key relationships with City of Grapevine Council officials, staff, business leaders and representatives from Rotary, volunteer groups, the education sector and the Tourism industry, to provide for further conversations and collaborations in the pursuit of education, tourism, trade, and cultural outcomes.

The overarching takeaway from the visit for both Council, Sister Cities Advisory Committee representatives and the Study Tour is that visitor experience and hospitality is key. The entire tourism and economic strategy within the City of Grapevine centres around creating an authentic experience (food, wine, tourism accommodation, main street and civic architecture, history, art, cultural activities, recreation, heritage sites, signage, events and transport) for both visitors and the community around the concept of 'Vintage Texas' along with a deep commitment to hospitality – the city's strategy is based on food, drink, somewhere to stay and something to do.

The City is also deeply committed to fostering friendships, mutual regard, and understanding among the citizens of both their community and internationally communities like ours, West Lothian, Scotland, Parras de la Fuente, Mexico and Krems an der Donau, Austria via formal sister city relationship. This friendship extends to the sharing of insight into economic development and governance strategy and the opening of avenues for growth in trade and investment for mutual benefit. Although Krems, Austria did not have delegates on the ground this year, we hope we will have opportunities in the future.

The success and longevity of Sister City relationships within the City of Grapevine is assured through sound and well-resourced governance arrangements including dedicated program management by City Staff, formal oversight committees composed of elected officials, community leaders and volunteers, revenue raising arrangements and vibrant networks and relationships with key education, industry, business and community representatives and groups. Seeing the operation of the sister city program in Grapevine firsthand validated The Barossa Council's benefit to our community through the Section 41 Sister Cities Advisory Committee, collaboration with Nuriootpa High School and the Barossa Young Ambassador Program.

In addition to the above insights, several key themes emerged in the delegation's broader observations during the visit as presented below.

City Identity

- A clear, agreed and consistent understanding of your city or region's identity is critical. Grapevine has established its core identity around Vintage Texas. This identity is reinforced across public infrastructure, commercial and residential architecture, tourist attractions and activities, public art.
- The city has enshrined its commitment to its identity (which is connected to livability, heritage, culture, economic prosperity, tourism appeal, brand and community connection) via city ordinance (by-law) which is discussed in more detail below.
- This identity is further reinforced in tourism strategies, public infrastructure plans, economic development plans and heritage and culture strategies and there is a tangible collective feeling that local government, businesses and residents are all in this together and equally committed to celebrating their place and ensuring its prosperity.
- There is an opportunity for The Barossa Council and our community to consider this concept; its value to our region when reviewing our future Plans, Policies and Guidelines around Council civic infrastructure and other commercial development along with broader diversification of the economic environment, such as outdoor dining, eco-tourism & enhanced events.

Tourism and Visitor Economy

- Tourism and visitor experience shaping should be based on an understanding of the natural and built assets that make us special – what icons are within our ranks, what incredible buildings and structures do we have, where do our richest stories and historical experiences lay, where can you get a taste of the environment?
- If we are targeting the US market, which involves a significant period of travel, there is also a need to design curated experiences that capitalise on the offerings of South Australia more broadly rather than just the Barossa to create a holistic experience (ie Beach hills, wildlife, wine, outback) and one that makes the extended travel period worth both the time and financial investment. Premium wine experiences can be sourced across a range of international regions at a lower cost and in a more time effective manner which means we need to offer something that those regions can't. A clear understanding of the limited leave entitlements for US travelers', normally limited to approximately two-week vacation periods, is also a critical success factor in the market approach and product development.
- Family friendly is a core principle in sustaining visitation and livability. The City of Grapevine has specifically targeted families and has a range of family friendly hotels (including Great Wolf a water park themed hotel aimed at children) along with family friendly activities and attractions throughout the city.
- Public transport networks are critical to bringing workers in to sustain high levels of employment within tourism and hospitality industries which are traditionally lower paying and impacted by housing affordability. The City of Grapevine has invested heavily in bringing a commuter rail network to the city to service its tourism and hospitality workforce. Consideration should be given to the identification of solutions to public transport constraints currently inherent within the Barossa and its subsequent impact on visitor experience.
- Feedback was received that indicated that consideration needs to be given to our visitor's preferences and expectations – The Barossa needs to think like an American to inform hotel and accommodation design if we are intending to increase visitation from the US.
- A key strategy capitalised on by the City of Grapevine has been a targeted and sustained campaign over many years to cater to, attract and retain the convention industry. This is potential growth and investment area for the Barossa with current supply gaps in South Australia's convention and conference facilities in tourist regions. It has fostered an approach to sound design but also aggressive investment infrastructure that supports the convention market. It achieves a sound balance and community buy-in to ensuring investment in modern, designed, and is positive to such growth and investment and ultimately achieve economic outcomes.
- Based on the above observations and opportunities The Barossa Council and its tourism and economic development partners may seek to give consideration to both funding and seeking State Government financial support to fast-track tourism product development and investment, we need to be open for business and balanced with design, is a clear message from our colleagues in Grapevine and therefore to generate better economic and community returns and to assist in the attraction of regional events, investment and regional activation.
- Consideration should also be given to the activation of the Barossa's night tourism/night- time economy – for example the encouragement of tasting rooms in township Main Streets, live music festivals and activations and events that draw in overnight visitors.

Arts and Culture

- The infusion of art that is aligned to the commercial brand and regional identity into public spaces, city buildings and community infrastructure is a key opportunity to celebrate heritage and diversity, honour historical achievements, practices and events, to create a sense of place and enhance the experience of visitors immersing themselves in the local culture.
- The City of Grapevine has a deep commitment to public art dating back many years. During the period when cities across the US were seeing a rapid influx in mobile phone tower infrastructure, the City of Grapevine saw an opportunity to secure funds for public art through tower lease fees. As a result, the City approved the quarantining of all mobile phone tower lease fees for public art and established a committee to oversee the expenditure of funds. This strategy has seen public art embedded throughout the city including historic main street, recreation centres, civic buildings, open spaces and sporting precincts.
- Couple with Grapevine's investment in tourism and associated economy their work in balancing art and culture and preservation or design of modern buildings is a significant take away, the message being they are open for business in so many ways. It goes well from our take aways that investment in our events, sorting and now Barossa Creative Industries Centre is a strong pathway and foundation for appropriate growth.
- Consideration should be given to the model implemented by the City of Grapevine in the shaping of a strategy that ensures that public art can contribute to the achievement of the outcomes outlined above whilst also drawing upon a sustainable funding source.

Heritage and History

- The City of Grapevine's identity is steeped in history and heritage. To protect, preserve and enhance its districts and landmarks of architectural, archaeological, cultural and historical importance the City approved a Grapevine Historic Preservation Ordinance in 1991. The purpose of the ordinance (Council By-Law) was to:
 - Protect and enhance the districts and landmarks which represent distinctive elements of Grapevine's historic architectural and cultural heritage;
 - Foster civic pride in accomplishments of the past;
 - Protect and enhance Grapevine's attractiveness to visitors and the support and stimulus to the economy thereby provided;
 - Insure the orderly, efficient and appropriate growth and development of Grapevine;
 - Promote economic stability and prosperity of the community by encouraging the most appropriate use of such significant property in Grapevine; and
 - Stabilise and improve property values.
- The Ordinance was further revised in 2013 to address identified risks to the heritage objectives of the city and is supported by detailed design guidelines. The direct impact of the introduction of the Ordinance has been the achievement of a balance between the preservation of the richness of the unique 'feel' of the city and appropriate infrastructure development and economic investment that enhances livability and visitor experience.
- Another key strategy evident in Grapevine to support heritage and historical preservation, is the implementation of quality interpretive signage at key attractions, thoughtful place naming (reference to historical figures and events), and township signage and way finding with tangible links to regional and individual village identity and commercial brand.
- Given the Barossa has a shared commitment to heritage and historical preservation whilst also enhancing livability and visitor experience, there is an opportunity to review Council's planning and building policy settings and guidelines, asset and infrastructure design guidelines and its

strategy and approach to public signage (township signage; key attractions and landmarks interpretive signage; and civic location and community facility signage) to ensure ongoing alignment with the Community and Council's vision for the region's commercial brand and grass roots identity.

- When designing Council's public signage strategy, consideration should also be given to sharing the stories of our first nations people in an integrated approach to interpretive signage design.

Events & Volunteerism

- The City of Grapevine's vibrancy and event sustainability is reliant on a deep commitment to volunteerism. According to the City of Grapevine, high levels of volunteerism are generated through creating a sense of pride in the city and a commitment to place.
- Volunteer engagement is also mobilised and strengthened via the use of appropriate incentives and rewards including honorariums, financial contributions to volunteer groups and clubs (ie groups and committees across schools, sporting clubs, charitable organisations, civic services etc) and complimentary participation in ticketed events.
- Active pursuit and securing of sponsorship opportunities is critical in elevating event offerings and supplementing City of Grapevine funds. Festivals and events can be broken down into component parts to provide layered sponsorship offerings for designated areas, activities and physical infrastructure for visual marketing. A sales orientation is required to leverage sponsorship opportunities and to develop long lasting sponsorship relationships.
- The City of Grapevine has a vibrant event calendar and offers a combination of free community events and large-scale ticketed events which are more commercial in nature. This diversity of event resourcing models allows for scalability and financial sustainability, particularly where the input costs are higher and require more coordination of volunteer effort, event infrastructure and planning and higher levels of risk management.

Grapevine's Annual Festivals & Events

Grapevine was recognised by the International Festival & Event Association. Their three main annual events are:

- **GrapeFest** (the largest Wine Festival in the Southwest)
- **Main Street Fest** (family-friendly festival that is three fun-filled days of live music, craft beverage experiences, delicious eats, shopping, a unique KidZone, tons of fun in the Carnival & Midway, the Grapevine Art Project)
- **Christmas Capital of Texas** (one of the highlights of Grapevine Christmas)
- Consideration should also be given to strengthening relationships with community groups and volunteer organisations to partner on event activation and delivery and to defining roles and responsibilities for regional event management between Barossa Australia and The Barossa Council to ensure the optimal use of resources and strategic oversight of major regional events.

Trade and Investment

- Public/private partnerships are an integral strategy in bringing in investment to enhance publicly funded infrastructure and initiatives. The City of Grapevine has several examples of successful public private partnerships including Grapevine Mills, which incorporates a train station, hotel and entertainment venue.
- A key economic enabler that the City of Grapevine has leveraged off to build a strong tourism and visitor industry is its proximity to Dallas Fort Worth International Airport. The city actively

supported the establishment of the DFW airport within its boundaries, contributing land for that purpose in the 1970s thus ensuring easy access for large volumes of visitors and creating a source of stable employment for many of its residents.

- Texas is the fifth largest wine-producing state in the U.S. and with more than 470 wineries in the State, the wine industry contributes more than \$1.83 billion of economic impact. Against this backdrop Grapevine has served as a trendsetter in wine culture and a leader in the Texas wine industry with award-winning festivals celebrating the fruit of the vine as well as wineries and winemakers for more than 25 years. Grapevine has also been recognised as the headquarters of the Texas wine tasting experience, having invested in the establishment of a vibrant and growing urban wine trail which features daily wine tastings and special events throughout the year.
- The city also strategically positioned itself to cater for the meeting and convention industry with significant hotel accommodation offerings and a diverse range of small, medium, and large meeting spaces and convention centres which attract thousands of business and leisure visitors each year.
- In addition to its cultural, heritage and historical attractions, the city has built a diverse economic portfolio driving sustainability across its many sectors.
- There are many parallels in the economic profile for the Barossa and consideration could be given to opportunities to pursue conversations with the State Government regarding an airport facility (commercial passenger services and freight) within close proximity to the Barossa Valley.
- The active wine tasting, sales and festival offerings within Grapevine and its positioning as the Texas wine industry headquarters also offers the Barossa a valuable entry point to the US market. The opportunity to promote Barossa wines and establish trade connections has also been further strengthened via the City of Grapevine's commitment to featuring Barossa wines at its annual GrapeFest event.
- There is also an opportunity to explore whether there is a current South Australian regional convention centre industry supply gap and to validate whether this presents an avenue to expand the Barossa's tourism product in meeting any identified unmet demand.

Civic and Governance

- The City of Grapevine in many ways has faced and continues to face similar challenges, the most pertinent being:
 - They too are running out of land for growth and face similar future urban planning challenges.
 - Ageing workforce.
 - Growing competition for resources.
 - Expanding expectations for services and infrastructure and asset management
 - Climate impacts.
 - Efficiency and productivity.
- Many synergies and opportunities for cross team collaboration on how they are solving long term planning matters is evident and can be explored through technology solutions to get teams together online.
- They work closely with schools and education groups to grow the pool of those interested in serving their local community, there are take aways that can support The Barossa Council.
- Equally the system of Local Government we operate in is more mature in specific areas that they have interest in three are key in conversation our asset management processes and our processes of reform and organisational culture and use of modern emotional intelligence systems to support continuous improvement and generally our drive for continuous improvement.

FINANCIAL ANALYSIS

Expense Type	Council Cost
Flights - Adelaide to Sydney, Sydney to Dallas Fort Worth Return	\$26,994.69
US Travel Visa	\$98.16
Adelaide Airport Long Term Parking	\$191.82
Incidentals – Council Branded Clothing Items & Hat	\$524.61
TOTAL	\$27,809.28

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS AND THANKS

Strengthening Global Connections: Barossa Delegation Thanks City of Grapevine

The Barossa Council delegation extends its heartfelt gratitude and sincere appreciation to the City of Grapevine, its staff, key stakeholders, businesses, volunteers and the wider community for the outstanding hospitality and warmth shown during our September 2025 visit.

The meticulous planning, seamless coordination and gracious reception made the visit both comfortable and highly productive. The attention to detail and thoughtful organisation ensured delegates could focus on strengthening relationships, exploring shared opportunities and promoting the Barossa region on the international stage.

Special thanks are extended to everyone involved in developing and delivering the itinerary and supporting the promotion of Barossa and its wines at GrapeFest 2025. From precise scheduling and efficient logistics to the friendly and welcoming atmosphere at every event, the professionalism and commitment of our hosts were evident throughout.

The delegation also appreciated the camaraderie and shared enthusiasm of our new friend (Peter) from West Lothian, Scotland, and friends from Parras de la Fuente, Mexico, whose warmth and friendship added to the success of the visit.

The kindness, generosity and collaborative spirit shown by all created an environment that fostered meaningful connections and strengthened the enduring bond between our cities.

The experience has left a lasting impression and further enhanced the reputation of the Barossa as a region committed to cultural exchange, friendship and global collaboration.

The Barossa Council looks forward to continuing this valued relationship with Grapevine and to welcoming future visitors to our region, where we hope to reciprocate the same warmth and generosity that was so graciously extended to us.

