



Food for thought

A regular look across food, beverage and agribusiness supply chains

Summer 2025/26



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Lighter, smarter, cleaner

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Packaging's next battle: Lighter, smarter, cleaner



Overview

- Packaging has moved from back-room cost to front-line strategy - it now shapes shelf space, logistics efficiency and export access
- Innovation is landing in everyday formats - lighter bottles and cans, longer-lasting salads and breads, simpler to recycle designs and smarter labels
- Scale is rising while standards are tightening - high volumes and tougher rules mean brands must redesign packaging that meets global recyclability goals without raising costs

The packaging on our food and beverages can often be something most of us take for granted. It keeps milk cold, helps the bagged spinach stay crisp and then quietly heads to the kitchen recycling bin after dinner. That humble bottle or wrapper also impacts what we buy and what we pay - from a picnic wine can that chills fast in the esky to a fizzy-water bottle whose lid now stays attached instead of rolling under the car seat. Yet behind the packaging we see sits a whole system that influences which products reach the supermarket shelf, how smoothly they move through trucks and warehouses and whether they pass checks into important new markets.

Packaging has shifted from an end-of-line cost to a strategic tool that can boost product sales, unlock export access and shape brand reputation.

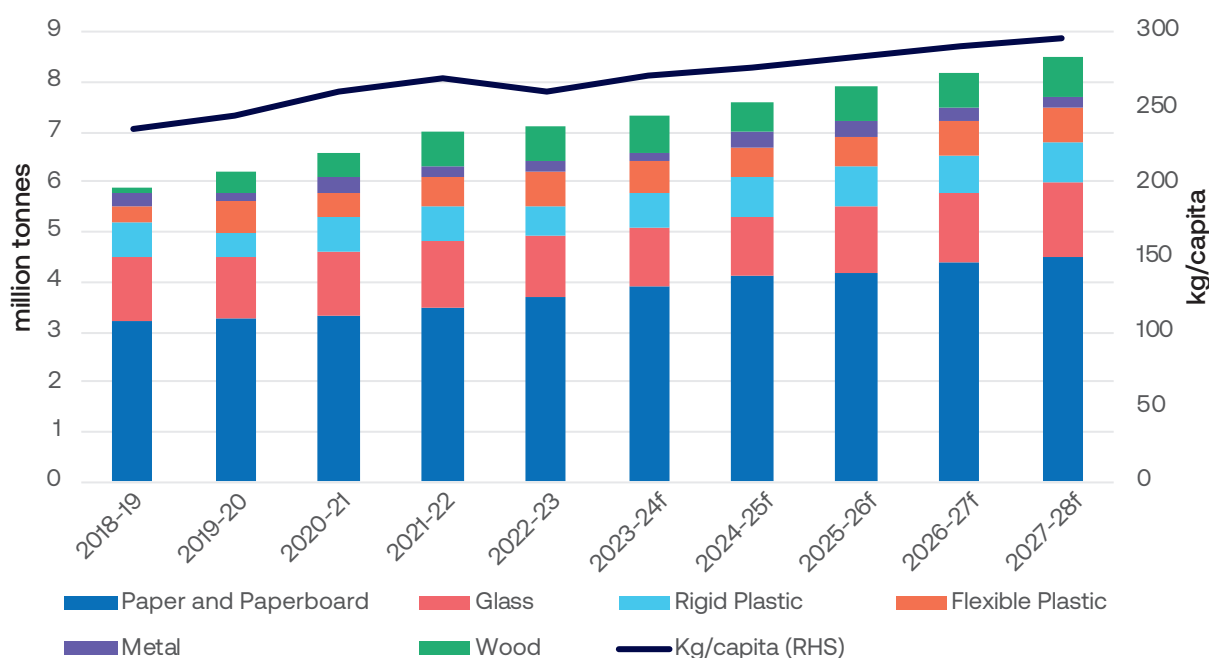
Innovation in packaging is now appearing in everyday formats - lighter bottles and cans, longer-lasting salads and breads, simpler to recycle designs and smarter labels. Scale and standards are rising too. The average Australian goes through more than a quarter of a tonne of packaging a year. For exporters, the bar is even higher. In the European Union (EU), regulators want all packaging to be recyclable by 2030, so brands that meet those specifications without lifting price are likely to win market share.

Why packaging matters more than ever

For food and beverage companies, packaging now acts as a freshness system, billboard and logistics tool all in one. Make it lighter and freight fuel costs drop. Make it the right size and more units fit per pallet with fewer breakages. Make it simpler to recycle and less ends up in landfill. The same design decisions also determine whether

shipments pass retailer checks or meet overseas import rules. Something as simple as changing a one-litre juice bottle from round to square can increase pallet density, reduce shipping costs and help the product stack neatly in a fridge. In short, packaging shapes cost, compliance and consumer choice.

Australia's total packaging used vs packaging per capita 2018/19 - 2027/28f



Source: APCO, ANZ

Regulation is driving change

Australians use about seven million tonnes of packaging a year - roughly 264 kilograms per person across paper, glass, plastic, metal and wood. That is equivalent to about 500 empty wine bottles, or around 20,000 takeaway coffee cups for each person. Across Europe, people generate around 186 to 190 kilograms per person - around 370 empty wine bottles. Volumes like that have turned reduction and recyclability from nice-to-have goals into must-do rules. Governments are tightening regulations, retailers are raising standards and shoppers expect credible sustainability without paying more.

In the EU, new laws require all packaging to be recyclable by 2030, the amount of empty space in food and beverage packaging to be capped and waste-prevention targets to be set by 2040. The rules apply to any brand exporting to the EU, not just those based there.

Australia is also increasing its regulatory focus. A draft national design approach aims to make packaging recyclable in practice, with proposals for minimum recycled content and clearer on-pack labelling. Container deposit schemes now run nationwide with a ten cent refund on bottles and cans, and several states restrict certain single-use

plastics. As a result, brands need formats that work across all states and territories.

One example could be a lemon-lime soft drink in a clear plastic bottle with a cap that stays attached when opened and a small easy-peel label. This would help recyclers as the bottle - which would be eligible for the deposit refund everywhere - would be easier for cameras and near-infrared sensors to identify due to its small label and clear colouring. That means fewer sorting errors, cleaner plastic and more bottles being made back into bottles rather than into lower-grade products such as park benches or plastic strapping used to secure boxes and pallets.

Innovation on the line

Across the food and beverage landscape, brands and packaging suppliers are continually innovating to deliver products that are lighter, keep food fresher and are easier to recycle, while not adding extra costs.

Wineries are shifting from heavy bottles to lighter glass, slim cans and bag-in-box formats for festivals and outdoor events. Lighter packaging cuts fuel use, reduces breakage and fits more units per pallet. Picnic-friendly wine cans chill fast in the esky and have less risk of smashing on the way to the park. Beverage lines in some major markets are also adopting tethered caps that stay attached when opened so they can be recycled together,

a design that could become more common in Australia over time.

Fresher for longer

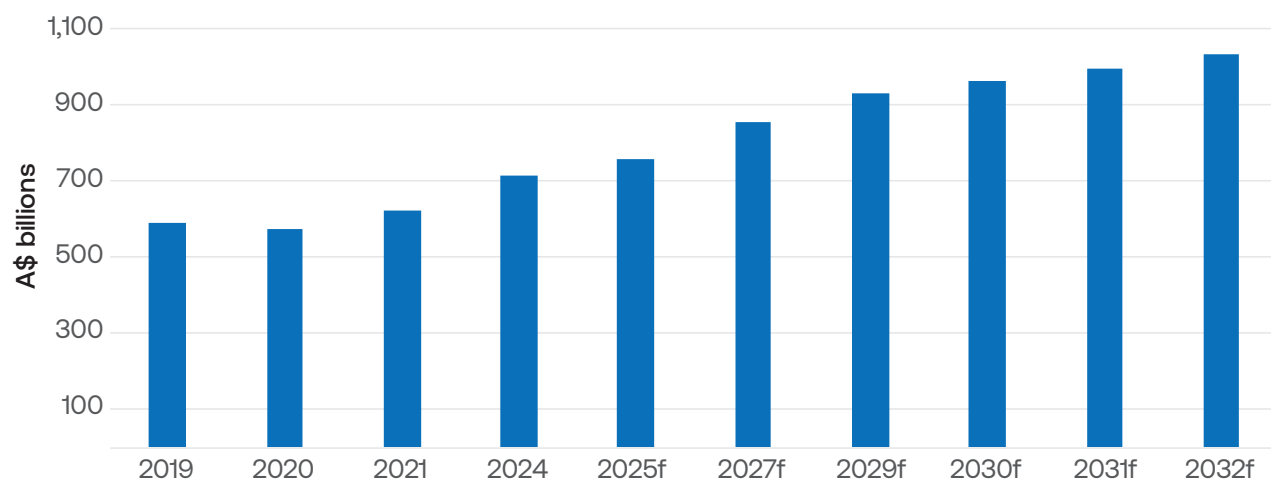
Food often spoils because air, moisture or microbes begin breaking it down once a product is sliced or washed. The smartest packaging improvements slow that process without heavy preservatives or higher prices, giving shoppers extra days of quality and cutting waste at home.

For example, modified-atmosphere packaging replaces the air in a sealed pack with a gentler gas mix containing less oxygen, helping fresh pasta or sliced cheese last longer in the fridge. Salad bags use tiny laser pinholes allowing salad leaves to breathe, preventing fog and keeping them crisp. Bakery wraps with oxygen control use tougher plastic and small oxygen-absorbing sachets to keep sliced bread fresher on the bench.

High-pressure processing places sealed tubs of hummus or guacamole into a water chamber and squeezes them at high pressure, killing microbes without heat so the taste and texture remain fresh. Because this process helps keep food fresher, many brands are switching from thick silver pouches to clear tubs with peelable single-plastic lids, which recycling centres can recognise easily.

Edible coatings for fruit are also expanding. A whisper-thin plant-based layer on avocados,

Global food and beverage packaging market size 2025 - 2032f



limes or mangoes slows moisture loss. A tray picked in Bundaberg can reach Singapore still bright and firm, often without heavy plastic wrap. Increasingly, cucumbers may no longer need that tight plastic sleeve that catches your eye in the vegetable section of the supermarket.

Recyclable by design

A growing focus is on ensuring that packaging not only can be recycled but is easy for recycling systems to process. Many innovations are already visible. Family-sized bags of chips that once used shiny multi-layer film now use one plastic type so scanners can detect them correctly. Sparkling water bottles with tethered caps send both parts through the recycling process together, producing cleaner, food-grade plastic. Ready-meal trays are moving from hard-to-detect black to clear, while yoghurt tubs are dropping cardboard sleeves so both parts match and sorting speeds up.

Soft plastics remain the hardest challenge. They are light, often made from multiple layers and can confuse sorting meaning many centres do not take them. Companies are gradually replacing these with single plastic, recyclable options. Muesli-bar wrappers that once looked metallic now use a single plastic type.

Yoghurt squeeze packs are being redesigned with simple spouts made from one material. Frozen pea bags now use easy-peel labels so the film can be

recycled as one piece. Clear on-pack instructions such as “Return to store drop-off” or “Bin at home” make recycling easier. Even a family block of chocolate now tells you which bin to use.

Price, convenience and the shopper

Changes in packaging, whether from new regulations or product innovation, typically lead to cost and logistics adjustments, especially for smaller brands. Cold brew coffee moving from glass bottles to slim cans may require entirely new packaging machinery. Squeeze honey changing from a curved to a flat-sided bottle needs a new cap design, shorter labels and cartons that prevent bottles rubbing in transit.

Salad dressing switching from rigid bottles to lightweight refill pouches means reworking the filling and sealing steps on the line. Baby purée moving from pouches to small clear tubs means new heat-seal settings and outer cartons to stop tubs tipping. Even ice cream moving to paper tubs with new barrier linings needs tighter freezer cartons to stop lids popping.

Supermarkets also have their own packaging rules - clear rather than coloured bottles, lids that stay attached, shelf-ready cartons or specific recycling labels.



For smaller companies, meeting all these standards can stretch resources, but it can also create a chance to stand out on shelf.

Shoppers still care most about value and convenience, but sustainability now plays a stronger role in buying decisions. A ten cent refund on a clear drink bottle encourages returns. Salad bags with pinholes stay clear and fresh-looking. Right-sized cereal boxes fit inside pantries neatly and arrive with fewer crushed corners. Easy-open deli tabs appeal to older customers, while paper carry bags that do not tear earn goodwill. Simple recycling labels on tubs – for example, ‘Put tub and lid in household recycling’ – remove confusion at the bin.

Some forms of packaging can still hurt sales. Overpackaging can be an instant turn-off, such as individually wrapped bananas or biscuits with multiple layers. Hard-to-peel seals that splatter dip, cracked lids or coloured bottles that recycling centres cannot detect can frustrate shoppers and push them towards competing products.

Passport to export

For food and beverage producers going offshore, packaging has to meet rules on recyclability, recycled content and empty space. Many design for the toughest market first.

A mineral water destined for Germany adds the Pfand deposit mark, which signals the country’s bottle-return refund, and adopts a crate-friendly shape to fit standard return crates. An iced coffee headed for Japan switches to a 190 millilitre slim can that matches convenience store layouts and vending machine slots, with a small label that local scanners can read. A baby purée range exporting to the Gulf adds a tamper band and Arabic labelling, and uses a clear tub and lid made from the same plastic so that the whole pack can be recycled together. A hot sauce for the United Kingdom replaces its full shrink sleeve with a paper label so scanners can identify the bottle and adds the local On-Pack Recycling Label that tells shoppers how to dispose of each part.

A premium yoghurt targeting Singapore standardises its tub and lid plastics and uses a QR code to switch language and allergen details for each market without new artwork. One smart change at the factory can open several export markets at once.

The bottom line

Packaging is no longer an afterthought; it’s strategy. The best formats help keep food fresh, use less material, fit supply chains better and match what recycling systems can handle today. When that story is told clearly on pack, packaging itself can become a reason to pick a product up, not put it back.



Liquid gold: How olive oil became a global essential



Overview

- From kitchens to boardrooms – olive oil has become both a pantry essential and an investment story, linking health, heritage and global trade
- Global disruption meets opportunity – droughts in southern Europe slashed supply and sent prices soaring, opening space for new producers
- Australia steps up – counter-seasonal harvests, trusted brands and capital inflows are reshaping the global olive story

Almost everyone has an olive oil story. It might be an Italian nonna who swore by a spoonful each morning “for the heart” or the half-empty bottle on your kitchen bench that goes into everything from roast potatoes to chocolate cake. In Melbourne cafés, baristas now make olive oil lattes, in Tokyo, pastry chefs drizzle it over vanilla ice cream and in Los Angeles, fast-casual burger chains are switching to olive oil mayonnaise for clean label appeal.

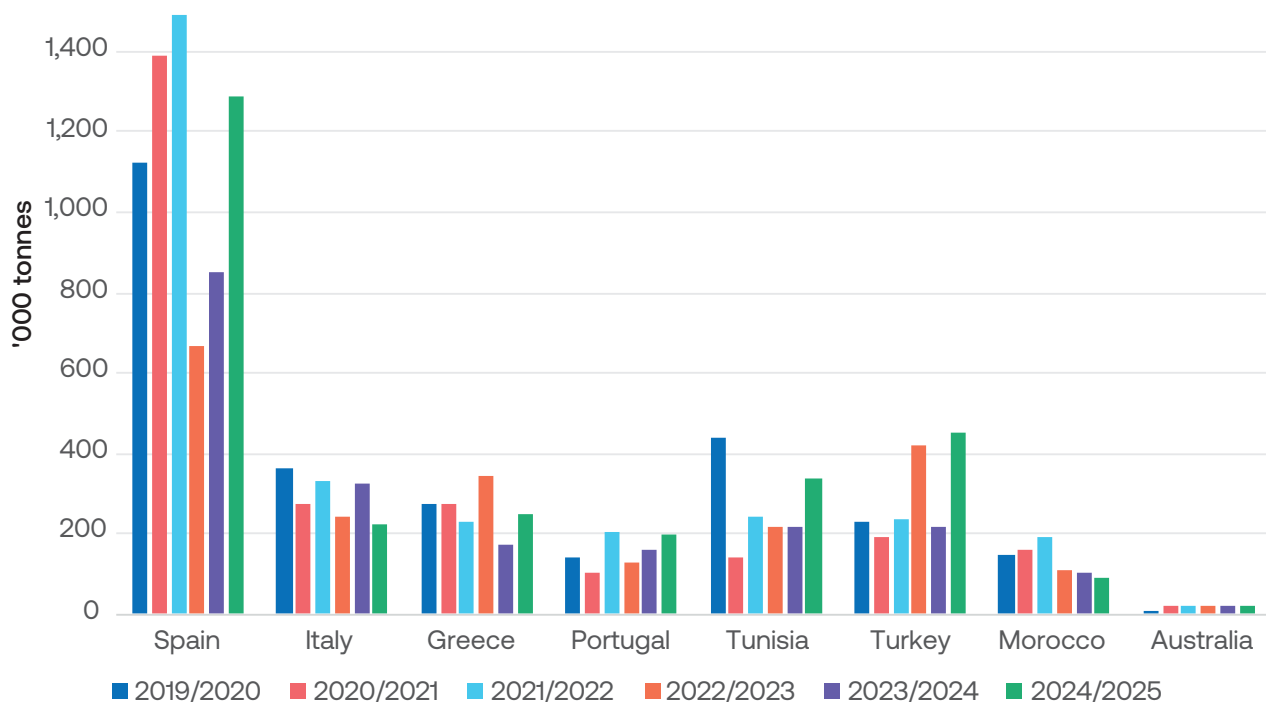
What was once a staple of Mediterranean diets has become a truly global food. Yet after two poor Mediterranean harvests, the global olive oil supply has tightened and prices have risen sharply. To alleviate this, producers outside Europe

are increasingly filling the supply gap – Australia’s counter-seasonal harvest lands just as northern stocks run low.

From tradition to turbulence

Olive oil has been around for thousands of years – at least six millennia by some accounts. It was never just food: ancient Greeks used it as perfume and skin balm, Romans as medicine, Egyptians as lamp fuel in temples. Until relatively recently it was largely a Mediterranean delicacy, both produced and consumed close to home, with Spain, Italy and Greece still providing around two-thirds of global output.

Largest olive oil producers (plus Australia) 2019/20 – 2024/25



Source: International Olive Council, USDA, ANZ

Recent events have contributed to a fundamental shift in the centre of olive oil production. Over the 2023 and 2024 harvests, searing drought and record heat across southern Europe slashed yields by up to forty per cent. Spain's crop fell from about 1.4 million tonnes to under 700,000 tonnes – its weakest in a decade. Prices more than doubled, peaking in 2024 at the equivalent of around A\$15,000 a tonne on European export data, while shortages in Spain, Italy and Greece reportedly sparked supermarket thefts, rationing by exporters and substitution in restaurant kitchens with sunflower or grapeseed oils.

As southern European producers struggled, producers elsewhere stepped in.

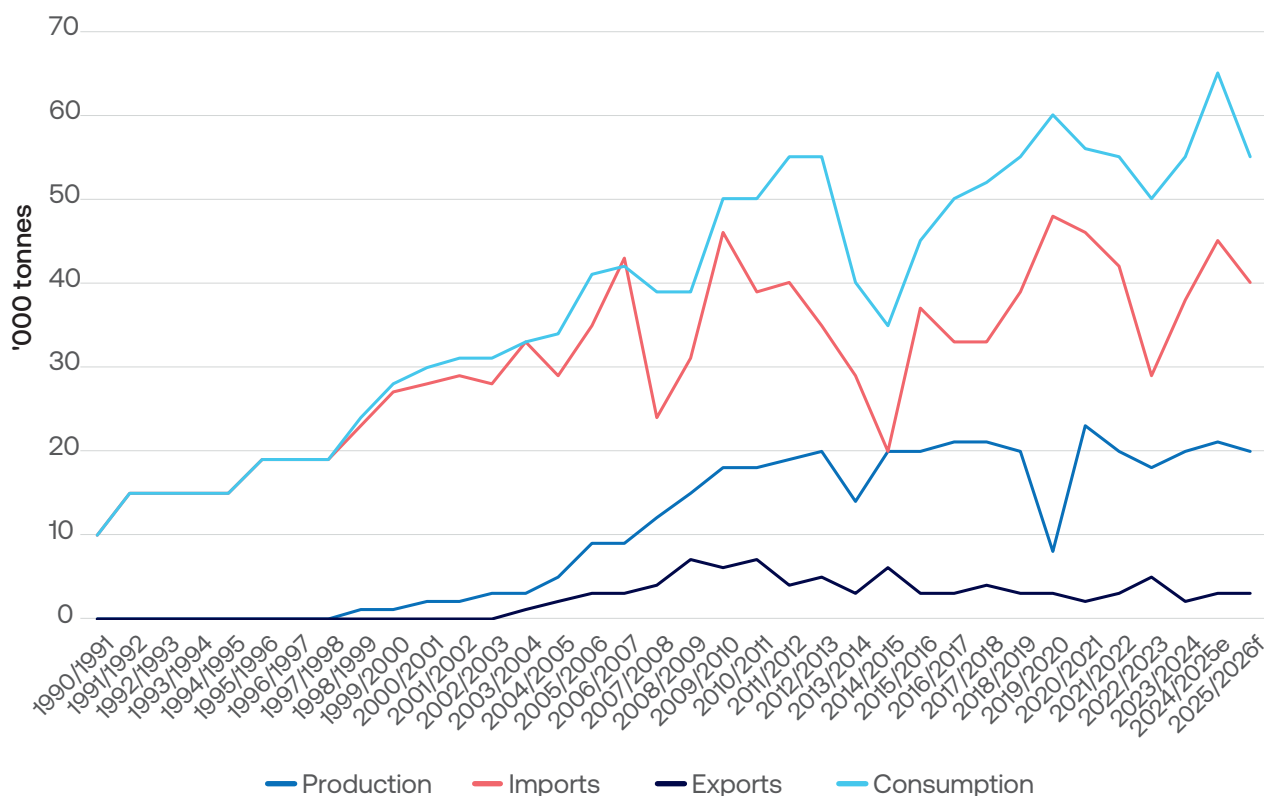
New-world groves in Australia, California, Chile and Argentina are filling more of the demand – scaling high-density orchards, investing in water efficiency and accelerating traceability and premium branding.

Australia's time to shine

As recently as the 1990s, few imagined Australia would make world-class olive oil. In 2024–25, production sits near 19,000 tonnes, with industry ambition to double by 2035 as high-density groves mature. The olive belt stretches across Victoria's Goulburn Valley and Sunraysia–Mallee, South Australia's Adelaide Plains and Riverland, and Western Australia's Swan Valley and Margaret River. Super-high-density planting, mechanical harvesting and precision irrigation now lift both yield and consistency.

Australians use around 50,000 tonnes of olive oil each year, which works out to about two litres per person – roughly four standard 500 ml bottles. Around two thirds of that volume is imported and one third produced locally. Per-capita use has more than doubled since the 1990s as olive oil has shifted from an occasional indulgence to an almost everyday ingredient. Brands such as Cobram Estate and Alto have built scale and reputation at home while also growing sales into Asia and the US, alongside regional producers like Mount Zero that have earned strong followings among chefs and consumers.

Australian olive oil – consumption, imports, production, exports 1990/91 – 2025/26f



Source: USDA, ANZ

Australians – like consumers in many non-traditional olive oil markets – are becoming more selective and better informed about how oils are made. The most recognisable indicator is the extra virgin label, which in Australia is governed by an industry standard. In plain terms, extra virgin oil is made only by pressing the olives, with no heat or chemicals, and must pass strict taste and acidity tests. Virgin olive oil is made the same way but has a gentler flavour and slightly higher acidity, so it sits just below extra virgin in quality.

Because Australian groves are harvested from March to July and northern hemisphere groves from October to January, shoppers can access fresher oils across more of the year.

Like producers elsewhere, Australian growers are addressing climate risks proactively. They are shifting toward drought-tolerant varieties, using precision drip irrigation with soil-moisture sensing, and investing in on-farm renewables, such as solar irrigation pumps or biomass boilers that turn prunings or olive pomace (the pulp left after pressing the oil) into heat for hot water or space heating at mills.

Further afield, new production regions are reshaping the olive map. In California, modern closely-planted orchards now cover the Central Valley, with producers like California Olive Ranch and Corto Olive Co. using mechanised harvesting, solar-powered mills and regenerative farming, often milling oil within hours of harvest. In South America, Argentina and Chile have scaled quickly for export, while in North Africa, Morocco has emerged as a major global producer and Tunisia is bottling more under its own premium labels. In New Zealand, the Hawke's Bay and Wairarapa

regions are producing award-winning extra-virgin olive oils – especially from the stony soils of Wairarapa, which deliver distinctly green, grassy oils with a strong peppery finish.

Globally, innovation is also transforming every link in the olive chain. On farms, drones and soil sensors monitor tree health, precision irrigation maximises water efficiency and new cultivars promise resilience against climate stress. In mills, continuous cold-press systems and nitrogen-sealed storage keep freshness intact. Cobram Estate's Ultra Premium Fresh Pressed range, for example, is harvested and cold-pressed within hours, often inside a six-hour window.

From kitchen to lifestyle

Olive oil has shifted from a simple cooking fat to a lifestyle choice. Global consumption has climbed by more than 20 per cent in the past decade. In Australia, it has more than doubled since the 1990s, and in the US it has tripled since the 1980s. Across Asia, use is rising fast as middle-class households embrace the Mediterranean diet and see olive oil as a marker of health and quality.

Health is central to that appeal. Olive oil sits at the heart of the Mediterranean diet, linked to lower cholesterol, anti-inflammatory benefits and longer life. For older consumers it may be seen as improving heart health and moderation, while for younger ones it ties in with natural eating, wellness and authenticity.

Shoppers are also becoming more selective about provenance and presentation.

Labels now highlight harvest dates, regions and certification, while packaging innovation helps preserve freshness and convey value. Dark bottles protect antioxidants, refill pouches cut freight emissions and elegant gift designs have made

olive oil an affordable indulgence that now sits comfortably beside wine and chocolate – the kind of thing you'd bring to a dinner party and watch disappear faster than the shiraz.

That shift has spilled well beyond the kitchen. In the US and Japan, bakers and ice-cream makers use olive oil instead of butter. In Asia, cosmetics companies are turning olive by-products into moisturisers and serums, and food companies are creating functional oils enriched with omega-3s or plant sterols for ageing consumers.

Even with new competition from sunflower, canola, avocado and coconut oils, olive oil's blend of flavour, science and heritage gives it remarkable staying power. Few ingredients move so easily from a Michelin-star kitchen to a home frypan or a skincare label. Its versatility is its edge – the same bottle can finish a Tuscan bruschetta, lift a Japanese sashimi plate and smooth a Californian smoothie.

The investment angle

For capital allocators, olives may be attractive now for practical reasons: the crop is perennial and long lived, orchards are land-backed, cashflows come from annual harvests and pricing has strengthened as Mediterranean supply tightened. Modern groves are also highly mechanised and relatively water efficient compared with many permanent plantings, which lowers unit costs and makes scale viable.



Australia's early 2000s olive expansions tested that model. Some ventures stumbled on timing, yet the core economics held: high-density planting, mechanical harvesting and consistent extra virgin quality create reliable throughput for mills and brands.

The result is an investable chain where value can be captured at orchard, processing and retail.

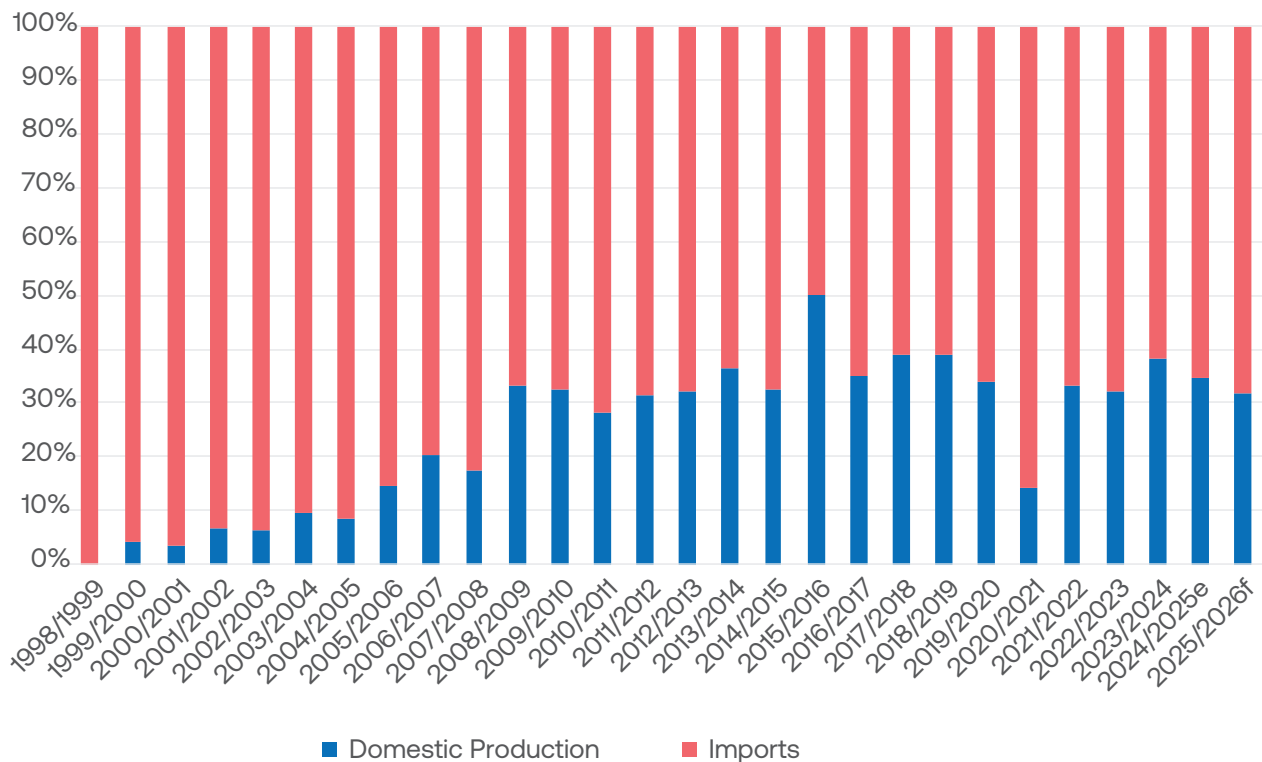
Today, the capital mix is broader and more disciplined. Listed producers such as Cobram Estate show how vertical integration - orchard, mill and brand - lifts margins and supports exports to Asia and the US. Private capital from family offices and super funds is re-engaging for land appreciation, operational yield and ESG alignment.

Corporate partners in food and wellness are taking strategic stakes to secure premium oil for fortified foods, cosmetics and nutraceuticals.

In comparison with other permanent crops, olives tend to offer relative stability: lower frost exposure than grapes, less dependence on pollination and peak irrigation than almonds, and productive lives that can exceed forty years. Yields take time to build, although mature blocks can deliver steady cashflow with flexibility around land and water use.

Globally, capital is being deployed to diversify climate risk. Spanish co-operatives are backing orchards in Morocco and Chile, Californian groups are trialling regenerative systems for carbon credits, and Australian producers are exploring sustainability-linked finance for new plantings and mill upgrades. For investors seeking real assets with defensible brands, health-linked demand and credible sustainability, olives may now fit the brief.

Share of Australian olive oil consumption from domestic production vs imports 1998/99 - 2025/26f



Source: USDA, ANZ

What comes next

Olive oil's next chapter will be shaped by climate, credibility and creativity. Mediterranean harvests will rebound but remain unpredictable, keeping the door open for newer producers in Australia, Argentina and North Africa. Innovation is spreading from orchard to supermarket shelf – fortified oils, olive-based snacks, functional foods and skincare are giving the old staple a fresh twist. In Japan, chefs are drizzling it over gelato; in Melbourne, mixologists are using it in cocktails.

Asia's expanding middle class is the biggest growth story. Consumers in China, Japan and South Korea increasingly prefer mild, fruity oils and are drawn to clean, certified, traceable supply – an area where Australian producers have a distinct edge. At home, Australians are likely to keep trading up, choosing freshness and provenance over price as olive oil settles into its dual role as both everyday essential and affordable indulgence.

**For investors and producers alike,
the outlook blends opportunity and
responsibility.**

Water scarcity and heat are pushing adoption of drought-tolerant varieties, precision irrigation and renewable-powered mills, while rising global prices and year-round demand make efficiency and branding even more valuable.

For a product that once sat quietly at the back of the pantry, olive oil now plays the lead. It has raced off Spanish shelves, been poured over desserts in Tokyo and mixed into cocktails from California to Carlton. For consumers it's flavour and health in one bottle; for producers it's adaptation and innovation; for investors it's a living, sustainable story – the world's oldest oil with a distinctly modern shine.



Grey consumers, golden markets:

The impact of an ageing population on the food and beverage landscape



Overview

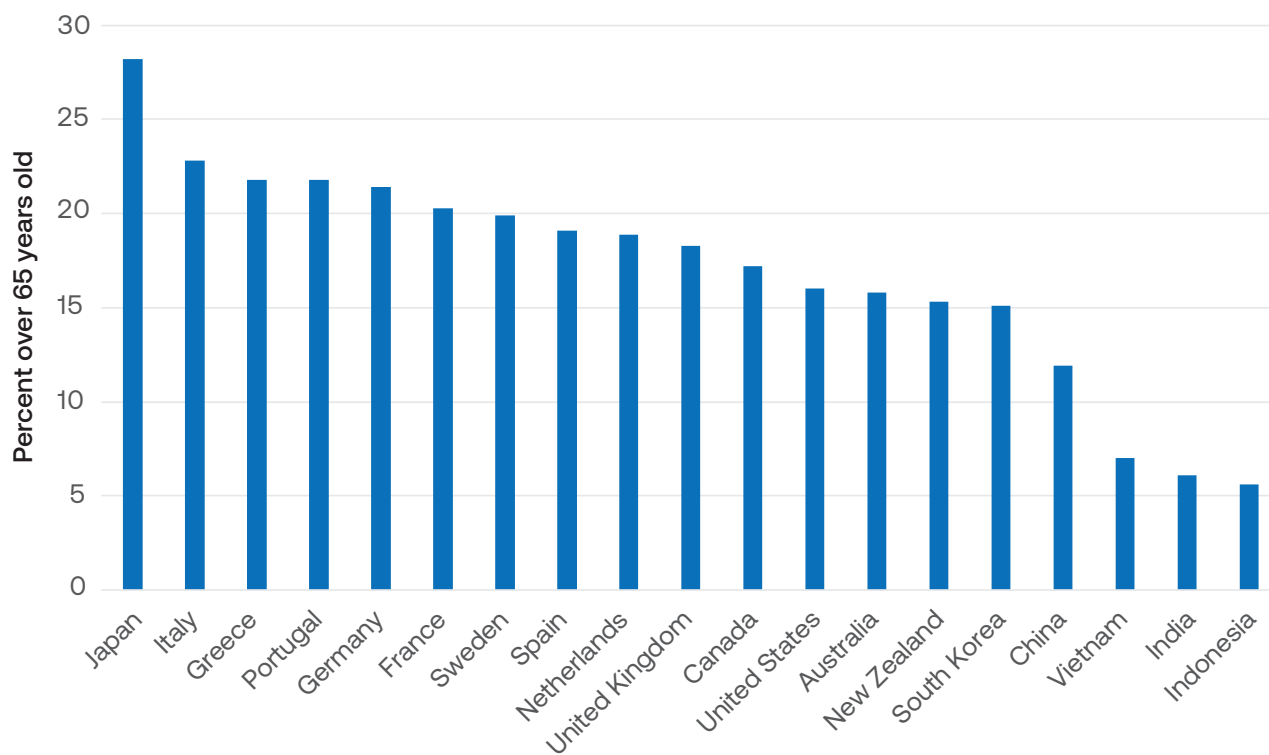
- Populations are ageing across Australia, Asia, Europe and the US, shifting demand from bigger baskets to smarter servings
- Older consumers want food that tastes good while delivering protein, comfort and ease in formats that fit smaller households
- Companies that design for real life – clear labels, easy-open packs, calmer stores, and dependable daytime delivery – will earn loyalty

The demographic turn

The supermarket aisle looks the same until you see it through older eyes. Packs need to open without a wrestle. Font needs to be readable at arm's length. Protein on the lid makes the decision easy. Portions for one or two often work better than family-size. These are the quiet signals of ageing populations across Australia, Asia, Europe and the US, and they are increasingly shaping food and beverage strategy from product design to store layouts.

Populations are ageing across most developed markets. In Australia around 23 per cent of people are 60 plus, and a little over one in six are 65 plus, while about 18 per cent are under 15 – a clear shift in the centre of gravity. Japan now has close to three in ten people aged 65 and over. South Korea sits close to the United Nations threshold for a 'super-aged' society, with its 65 plus share climbing toward one in five and rising quickly. China has already passed the one-in-five mark for

Percentage of population over 65 – selected countries



Source: Population Reference Bureau (2023), ANZ

its 60 plus cohort. Much of Europe sits in the high-teens to early-twenties for its 65 plus share, and North America is on the same path, albeit from slightly lower levels. Families are smaller, people marry later, and life expectancy is higher, so more people are living longer, healthier lives.

Ageing is not one group. An active 65 year old in full-time work, a 75 year old who plays tennis and travels and an 85 year old who prefers soft textures and smaller portions are all 'older', but they shop and eat differently. A helpful way to think about it is two broad cohorts. The first is 'active longer', people in their late fifties through their seventies who want food that fits busy days and supports strength.

The second is 'later life', individuals in their late seventies and eighties who value comfort, safety and ease above variety. The line between them moves by household and by health, which is why companies may consider building product ranges that adjust with people, instead of tagging products as 'for seniors'.

Many individuals in their sixties and seventies are still working, travelling and playing sport. If you stay active, food has a bigger job to do. Meals for older consumers should provide steady energy to avoid afternoon dips, enough protein to preserve muscle and strength, textures that do not tire the jaw and packaging that opens without strain to help people retain their independence. Protein guidance for healthy older adults commonly lands at about one gram per kilogram of body weight per day, with higher targets for those who are very active or in recovery. That need is rising while total appetite often falls, which pushes food makers toward higher protein per serve and more obvious numbers on pack.

What changes in everyday eating

As people move into their sixties and seventies, the pattern is consistent. Shoppers reach for protein-labelled dairy because it is an easy way to meet a daily target. Mince, pulled meats and slow-cook cuts replace weekday steaks since they are versatile and comfortable to eat. Boneless, mild

fish sells when packs are portioned for a single pan with simple reheating notes.

Fortified everyday foods become common
- calcium and vitamin D in dairy, fibre in bakery, lower-GI cereals for steadier energy. Drinks get lighter with tea-based options, broths and electrolyte waters.

Packs shrink to one or two serves so food stays fresh and waste falls, and resealable lids become standard so smaller households can pace themselves. None of this feels medical. It is ordinary food, tuned to how people live now.

How shopping habits and daily routines are being rebuilt

Supermarkets are changing the trip itself. Quieter trading windows with lower lights and fewer beeps help many shoppers and match older daytime routines. Sections that carry supplements and medical nutrition products are shifting closer to fresh meals so an older shopper or carer can do both jobs in one pass. Expect more end-of-aisle displays that pull together a complete dinner for one or two - protein, sides, dessert - instead of sending people hunting across the store.

Independent stores - local butchers, bakeries and greengrocers - can stand out by cutting and packing for purpose: boneless fish, thigh fillets sized for two plates, half-loaves of sliced sourdough, vegetable packs shaped for soups and stews.

**The advantage is service,
not a tiny price difference.**

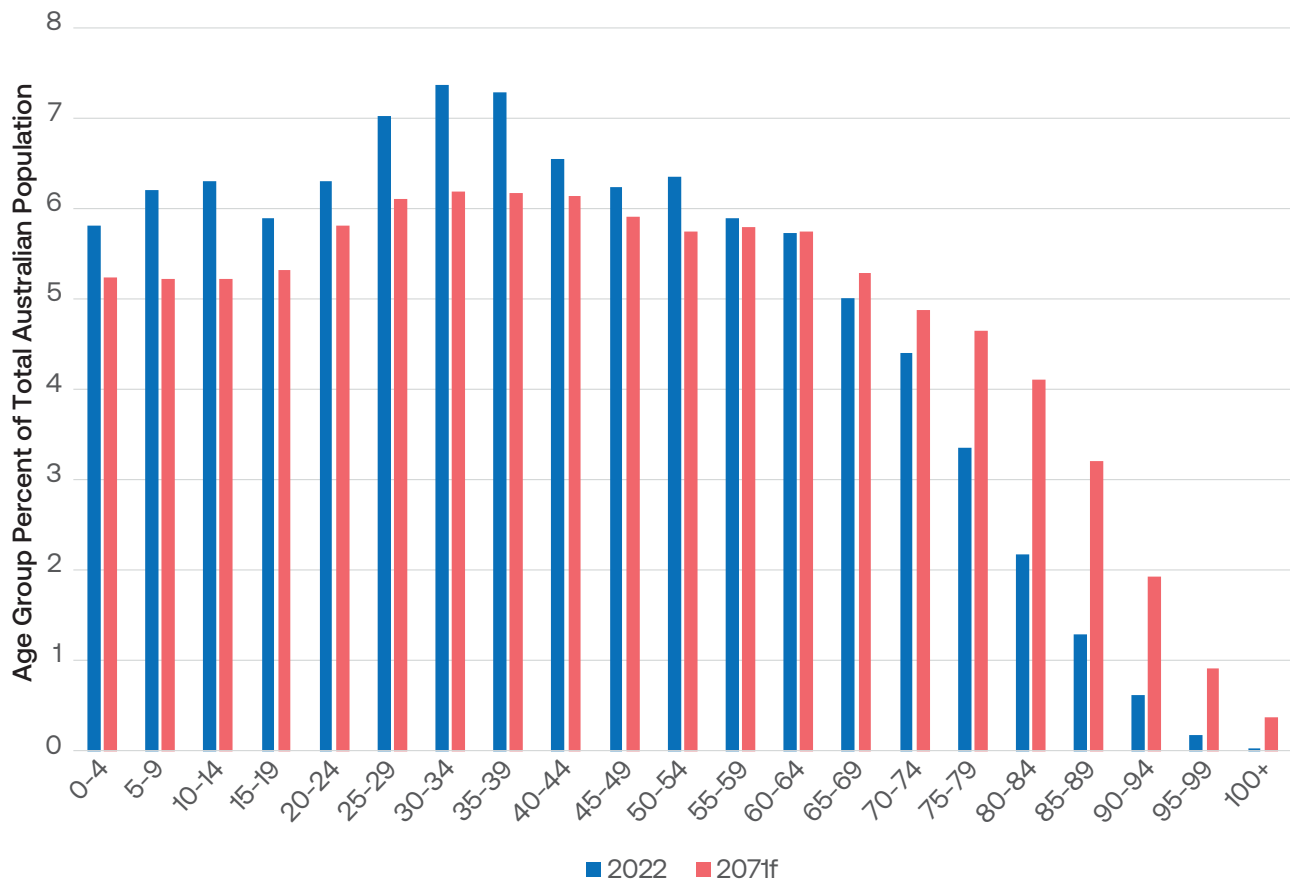
Useful advice on cuts, reheating and freezing earns repeat business faster than shaving a few cents.

Hospitality and quick service restaurants are reshaping offers to match a daytime rhythm, with lunch now the main social meal for many older diners. Menus lean toward smaller bundles and mains that deliver meaningful protein without heavy salt, with sides that balance comfort with fibre. Clear but unobtrusive cues make choosing easy - grams of protein on the board, a discreet mark for dishes that are easy to chew and a set of lighter beverage pairings that feel right for the middle of the day.

E-commerce keeps growing as older consumers become more digital, yet they still prefer clear, uncluttered screens. The experience should feel effortless: sign-in that takes seconds, baskets that stay saved between sessions and type that is easy to read without zooming. Delivery windows work best in the mid-morning or early afternoon when people are at home, and a live phone line for changes prevents abandoned orders when plans shift. Substitutions should be predictable and respectful - swap out of stock products with the same product from a different brand, rather than substituting yoghurt for custard - so trust builds with every delivery.



Age group percentages of total Australian population - 2022 vs 2071 forecast



Source: ABS Population Projections, ANZ

A growing share of orders will go to places rather than households. Retirement villages, clinics and community kitchens need bulk deliveries that are easy to handle: easy-open case packs, meals with the right texture and hydration aids. They also need reliable chilled delivery so food stays at safe temperatures from the supplier to the kitchen. When something is out of stock, swap in a like-for-like item so kitchens can keep to the menu. The same design rules apply to home care where more people will age in place and receive scheduled deliveries.

What companies can do now

An ageing customer base opens different opportunities across the food and beverage value chain. Manufacturers, retailers, hospitality operators, e-commerce providers and investors can each pull specific levers to solve everyday problems, and each lever can create value.

In a way, food and beverage manufacturers can treat the needs of older consumers as a set of practical requirements. A number of examples highlight the kind of actions manufacturers could implement to better serve this market. Product descriptions could specify protein per serve - i.e., 20-25 grams in mains and 10-15 grams in snacks - delivered in food that still tastes like dinner. Salt levels can be kept modest where possible, with softer-texture versions of popular dishes so the same recipe is still palatable to older consumers. Packs need to be easy to hold and open, with resealable lids as standard so smaller households can pace consumption. Labels could use large print and strong contrast so they are readable at arm's length. Local execution matters: in Japan and parts of Korea, some food is sold with icons indicating chewability or texture (e.g., soft, minced, pureed), so adding these will let shoppers immediately know how easy the food

will be to eat; in Europe, proof on recyclability and material weight is expected; in the US, clear protein numbers paired with heart-healthy framing help decisions at shelf. A concrete example is a two-serve cottage pie that delivers 22 grams of protein per serve, uses a peelable film and includes a short reheating guide on pack.

For supermarkets and convenience chains, there is an opportunity to arrange shop floors around what people are trying to do, not just how products are stored in the back room. Loyalty data can flag suburbs with older customer bases so the range in the local supermarket tilts toward soft-chew

proteins and one or two serve packs where they matter most. Clear shelf tickets and simple icons for texture or protein content help decisions at a glance. A practical pattern is a 'dinner tonight' bay that pairs salmon portions with pre-cut vegetables and a light broth in grab-and-go sizes.

Ageing is not a side story. It represents a steady shift in who buys, when they shop and what feels right at the table. The companies who pay attention to this - whether clearer packs, right-sized portions, protein that is easy to enjoy and services that work in daylight hours - will earn trust one basket at a time.



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