

Wagga Wagga

Draft Destination Management Plan



City of
Wagga Wagga

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Wagga Wagga City Council acknowledges the contribution made by stakeholders who participated in the development of this plan, including:

- **Community members**
- **Local tourism businesses**
- **Regional and state government bodies**

We also acknowledge **Urban Enterprise**, specialist tourism consultants, for their contribution towards the community engagement, framework development and research undertaken to help inform and develop the Plan.

ACRONYMS

ART	Australian Regional Tourism
ATDW	Australian Tourism Data Warehouse
AUS	Australia
CBD	Central Business District
CSU	Charles Sturt University
DMP	Destination Management Plan
EV	Electric vehicle
FIFO	Fly-In, Fly-Out
GPR	General Purpose Revenue
LGA	Local Government Area
NVS	National Visitor Survey
NSW	New South Wales
NSW NPWS	NSW National Parks and Wildlife Service
SAP	Special Activation Precinct
SE	South East
STR	Smith Travel Research
SUP	Stand-up paddleboard
TRA	Tourism Research Australia
VFR	Visiting friends and relatives
VIC	Victoria
WWCC	Wagga Wagga City Council

GLOSSARY

Daytrip Visitor

People aged 15 years and over who travel for a round trip distance of at least 50 kilometres, are away from home for at least 4 hours, and who do not spend a night away from home as part of their travel. Same day travel as part of overnight travel is excluded.

Overnight Visitor

People aged 15 years and over who undertake an overnight trip of one night or more and at least 40 kilometres away from home are referred to as overnight visitors. Only those trips where the respondent is away from home for less than 12 months are in scope of the NVS.

International Visitor

A person is defined as an international visitor to Australia if they are currently a resident overseas, have been in Australia less than one year and are aged 15 years or over.

ACKNOWLEDGMENT OF COUNTRY

Wagga Wagga City Council acknowledges the traditional custodians of the land, the Wiradyuri people, and pays respect to Elders past, present and future and extends our respect to all First Nations Peoples in Wagga Wagga.

We recognise and respect their cultural heritage, beliefs and continuing connection with the land and rivers.

We also recognise the resilience, strength and pride of the Wiradyuri and First Nations Communities.

Wagga Wagga City Council yali gulbali-yanhi ngurambang Wiradyuri.

Walumaldhaany-galang bala mayiny Wiradyuri.

Yindyamali-yanhi mudyiganggalang-bu balumbambal-bu balugirbam-bu.

Yindyamali-yanhi bagaraygan ngurambang-guwal-i yandu murunwiggi Wagga Wagga-dha.

Ngilyanhi gulbali-bu yindyamali-bu guwiinyguliyalagu buyaa-bu giilaang-galam-bu.

Ngilyanhi gulbali-bu yindyamali-bu guwiinyguliyalagu dhaagun-bu bila-galam-bu nganha Wiradyuri-giyalang bala burrambin-bu nurranurra-bu.

Gulbali-yanhi Wiradyuri mayiny bagaraygan-guwal-bu bala yarruwala-bu waluwin-bu walanbam-bu dhirrangal-bu.

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Unique selling point



OUR VISION

“

Wagga Wagga is a leading regional destination, celebrated for its connection to country and vibrant expression of modern Australian character.

Executive summary

The Wagga Wagga Destination Management Plan (the Plan) 2025-2034 has been prepared to provide a strategic approach to foster the growth of a robust visitor economy in the region over the next 10 years.

The Wagga Wagga Local Government Area (LGA) attracts about 1.2 million visitors annually. In addition, the visitor economy contributes \$374 million in direct expenditure to the LGA, which is largely driven by day visitors, with an average spend of \$414 per visit.

Developed through collaboration with stakeholders, extensive data analysis, and thorough research, this plan aims to identify opportunities, establish a shared vision, and outline priority projects that will elevate Wagga Wagga as a destination into the future.

The intention of this plan is to support the objectives of the State Government's New South Wales Visitor Economy Strategy 2030 and the Riverina Murray Destination Management Plan 2030.



VISION

Wagga Wagga is a leading regional destination, celebrated for its connection to country and vibrant expression of modern Australian character.

WAGGA WAGGA BASELINE VISITATION AND SPEND (2024)

1.2m

Annual visitors

\$374m

Annual visitor spend

OUR 2035 VISITOR ECONOMY AMBITIONS

1.55m

Annual visitors
+350k growth

668k

🌙 Annual overnight visitors
+230k growth

883k

☀️ Annual day trips

The objectives of this plan:



Transform Wagga Wagga into a recognised regional holiday leisure destination



Deliver innovative visitor servicing to meet the diverse needs of Wagga Wagga’s key target markets



Grow the value of the visitor economy through attraction of overnight visitors, increasing visitor yield, and strategic tourism investment



Establish a well-connected industry to realise Wagga Wagga’s visitor economy potential



Develop a clear destination promise of the Wagga Wagga experience that is understood by key target markets achieved through upskilling and developing tourism businesses



Deliver compelling and motivational products and experiences through investment in key identified areas, including First Nations, Agritourism and culinary, Water and nature, and Creativity, culture and place.



Destination themes

Four destination themes have been identified for the plan, which are embedded into each Strategic Focus Area.

These themes clearly define what will make Wagga Wagga truly unique and have been determined through an analysis of Wagga Wagga’s existing strengths and emerging opportunities. These four themes are:

- a. First Nations
- b. Agritourism and culinary
- c. Water and nature
- d. Creativity, culture and place.



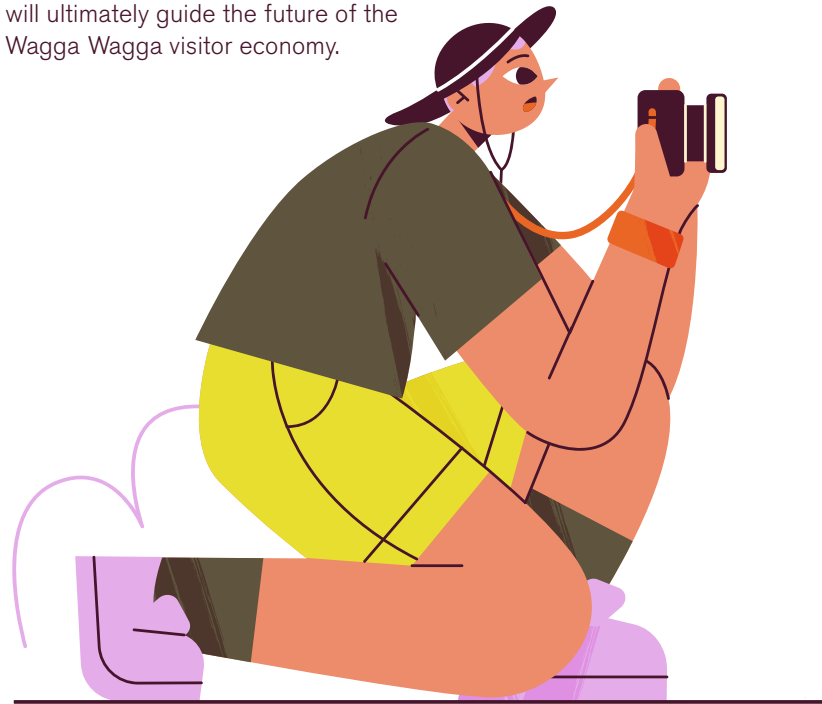
Figure 1



Strategic focus areas

Four strategic focus areas have been identified for the Wagga Wagga Destination Management Plan (the Plan).

These are the focus areas that will enable the region to achieve the Plan's vision and objectives, which will ultimately guide the future of the Wagga Wagga visitor economy.



“Strategic focus areas will enable the region to achieve the Plan’s vision and objectives – ultimately guiding the future of the Wagga Wagga visitor economy.”

1

Product and experience development

Create accessible opportunities for tourism operators to develop and improve skills, collaborate, and network.

Priority initiatives:

- Tourism Industry Development Program
- Tourism and events annual grants
- Youth in tourism
- Agritourism destination event

2

Visitor infrastructure

Support the improvement, development, and provision of visitor economy infrastructure. Enable an increase in visitation and encourage higher yield visitors to conveniently access the city.

Priority initiatives:

- Visitor servicing expansion
- Accommodation investment attraction
- City gateway and precinct signage
- Iconic infrastructure plan
- Attract national collections and conservation agencies and infrastructure
- First Nations Cultural Centre

3

Events and conferencing

Position Wagga Wagga as a leading regional events destination that offers a diverse, vibrant, and inclusive calendar of events that generates positive economic, cultural, social, and environmental outcomes for the city.

Priority initiatives:

- Seasonal beach activations
- Events Strategy and Action Plan
- Civic Theatre expansion
- Major convention/entertainment centre
- Sporting infrastructure improvements

4

Destination identity and marketing

Establish a destination identity that tells Wagga Wagga’s unique story to inspire visitation. Deliver a consistent message across all platforms that positions Wagga Wagga as the capital of the Riverina region.

Priority initiatives:

- Visitor trend research
- Develop the destination brand
- Marketing plan
- Delivering destination marketing

Destination Management Plan



INTRODUCTION

Wagga Wagga City Council (WWCC) have engaged with a diverse range of stakeholders to prepare a 10-year Destination Management Plan (the Plan) for the LGA.

This Plan has been informed by independent research and analysis, as well as consultation and engagement with industry representatives, community groups, businesses, council and government stakeholders, and the broader Wagga Wagga community.

The Plan aims to provide a strategic and unified direction for the development of Wagga Wagga's visitor economy through to 2034 with a focus on awareness, product development, and enabling infrastructure. This will be achieved by empowering and supporting the local tourism industry and community.

The Plan is the first of its kind for the LGA, representing WWCC's commitment to the visitor economy and the opportunities it presents to become a thriving visitor destination.



Roles of the visitor economy

Wagga Wagga City Council plays an important role in the visitor economy through investment in:

- Visitor information servicing
- Council owned and managed attractions and assets
- Wagga Wagga + Surrounds brand and marketing including:
 - Visit Wagga Wagga website
 - Visit Wagga Wagga social media platforms
 - Digital marketing and public relations
 - Destination marketing and campaign development
 - Publication and collateral development
 - Digital asset library through photography and videography
- Visitor economy product development
 - Lead on the Wagga Wagga Tourism Partner Program
- Visitor economy industry development
 - Industry development and capacity building
- Infrastructure investment
- Event attraction and sponsorship
- Destination event development
- Community event logistics support

There are many other organisations that directly and indirectly contribute to the ongoing sustainability and growth of the visitor economy in Wagga Wagga including:

Tourism industry associations and others

Local, state, and national tourism and hospitality associations with key advocacy and partnership roles:

- Wagga Wagga Business Chamber
- Charles Sturt University
- Eastern Riverina Arts
- Regional Development Australia - Riverina
- Destination Riverina Murray
- Australian Regional Tourism
- Wagga Wagga tourism-based businesses
- Neighbouring shire councils

State and national government agencies

- Crown Lands
- NSW National Parks and Wildlife Service
- Tourism Australia
- Regional Development Australia
- Destination NSW

Destination NSW

The lead government agency for the NSW tourism and major events sector, Destination NSW delivers economic and social benefits to the people of NSW through the development of tourism and the securing of major events. Their mission is to promote NSW as the premier visitor destination in the Asia Pacific by 2030.

- Assist with the development of tourism product and experiences
- Invest in job creation
- Invest in technology and industry development
- Marketing and public relations
- Business support
- Event attraction and sponsorship



BEST PRACTICE DESTINATION MANAGEMENT PLAN

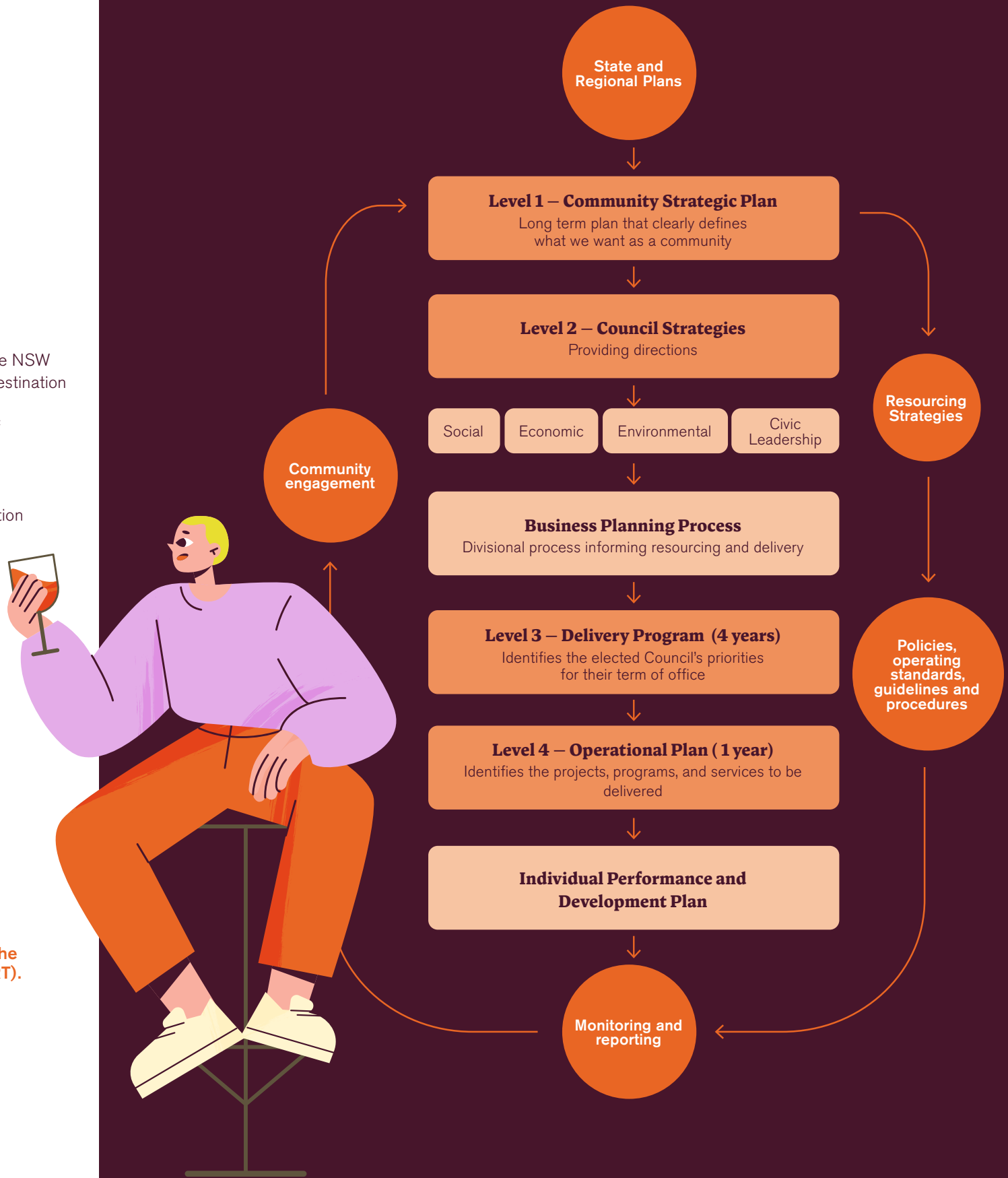
The Plan follows the Guide to Best Practice in Destination Management, as developed by the Australian Regional Tourism (ART).

This ensures Council can support visitor economy growth and sustainability by considering all destination management needs.

Figure 2

The Integrated Planning and Reporting Framework

The Destination Management Plan is a Level 2 Strategy of Wagga Wagga City Council



Destination Management Plan process

1

Industry research and analysis

- Review of relevant and current state, regional, and local policies and strategies
- Analysis of visitor data available through Tourism Research Australia (Local satellite profiles and National Visitor Surveys)
- Product and experience audit review based on existing databases and desktop analysis
- Visitor economy forecasting and data building

2

Stakeholder engagement and information gathering

A rigorous process of research, in-depth stakeholder engagement, market research, and assessment were undertaken to inform the Plan. The summary of consultation is outlined below.

Key stakeholder workshops:

- 36 x workshops with WWCC councillors and staff
- 4 x workshops with industry
- 10 x individual and small group engagement sessions with other key stakeholders, including:
 - Mawang Gaway (Aboriginal Consultative Committee)
 - Destination Riverina Murray
 - NSW National Parks and Wildlife Service
 - NSW Government Crown Lands
 - Wagga Wagga Business Chamber
 - Wagga Wagga village associations
 - Wagga Access Reference Group
 - Regional Council Tourism Partners (2024/25) (Lockhart, Snowy Valleys, Junee, Coolamon, Cootamundra-Gundagai, Greater Hume, Temora and Narrandera)
 - Wagga Wagga Business Roundtable

Online survey

- Business and Community Survey (170 responses)
- Interactive Pin Map for ideas generation (82 responses)

Focus research groups

- 2 x past visitor focus groups
- 1 x future visitor focus group
- 1 x youth resident focus group

3

Wagga Wagga Destination Management Plan background report

With findings generated from industry research and stakeholder consultations, the development of Wagga Wagga Destination Management Plan background report was developed including:

- Overview of the findings and research
- Identification of challenges and opportunities
- Informing key strategic considerations and overarching framework to define key tourism focus areas and priorities.

An overview of these findings can be found in the appendices.

4

Draft Wagga Wagga Destination Management Plan

Preparation of a Draft Destination Management Plan for public exhibition and feedback from community and industry.

5

Public exhibition

6

Final Destination Management Plan

Strategic context

Wagga Wagga Local Government Area (LGA) is strategically located in the Riverina region of New South Wales (NSW) and is intersected by the Olympic and Sturt Highways.

Wagga Wagga is a five-hour drive from both Sydney and Melbourne, and a three-hour drive from Canberra.

The LGA encompasses an area of 4,825 square kilometres of land and is home to about 69,709 people (Forecast.id, 2024), making it the largest inland regional city of NSW and the service catchment hub for the Riverina region. Wagga Wagga is forecast to grow in population by 19.49% to 83,294 by 2041 (Forecast.id, 2024). As a major growth area, Wagga Wagga boasts a strong and diversified economy with the largest sectors being: healthcare and social assistance; construction; public administration and safety; education and training; retail trade; manufacturing; and agribusiness (Economy.id, 2024). Alongside tourism, these industries are considered 'engines' that will drive NSW economies over the next 20 years.

Visitors can experience a vibrant calendar of events, a growing food and wine culture, and an array of nature-based attractions providing the opportunity for hiking, cycling, or kayaking. Because of this, Wagga Wagga benefits from a steady flow of visitors further supported by visitation through defence, education, and medical tourism.



Connectivity

Transport connection options for visitors and residents to reach and move within the Wagga Wagga LGA. Outside of the City of Wagga Wagga, public transport is limited, resulting in car dependency.



Air

Wagga Wagga Airport serves as a key transport hub for the Riverina region. Situated about 10km from the city centre, the airport provides essential connections for domestic and regional flights. The airport is serviced by QantasLink and Regional Express, who provide flights to Sydney (1hr 10mins), Melbourne (1hr 15mins), and Brisbane (2hrs).

During the 2022/23 financial year, Wagga Wagga Airport flight data indicated that an average of 3,700 passengers per week utilised the airport.

There are 120 flights scheduled each week, which are split evenly between inbound and outbound services. Of these flights, 75% take place during the week and 25% on weekends.

Beyond its role in facilitating air travel, the Wagga Wagga Airport contributes significantly to the local economy by creating local jobs and supporting tourism, business travel, health services, and freight transportation. The airport is an essential asset for the region's connectivity and growth, as it is a vital transportation hub connecting the city and broader Riverina region to destinations across Australia.



Train

Wagga Wagga Railway Station, serviced by NSW TrainLink, is located in the city centre. NSW TrainLink's services from Wagga Wagga include twice-daily trains to-and-from destinations such as Sydney and Melbourne. The location of the station and the variety of services cater to both commuters and visitors seeking to travel to Wagga Wagga and other key locations in the region via coach services.



Bus

Bus services in Wagga Wagga provide transport options for residents, connecting various neighbourhoods within the city and offering connections to surrounding locations.

Visitors are less inclined to use bus services as there are a lack of connections to attractions and experiences in the region beyond the city limits.



Car

Wagga Wagga is highly accessible by car as it is intersected by the Olympic and Sturt Highways, which service the Melbourne to Sydney touring routes. Wagga Wagga is a three-hour drive from Canberra and a five-hour drive from Sydney and Melbourne.



Bicycle

Wagga Wagga offers a cycling network catering to both recreational riders and commuters. The Active Travel Network, which is currently under construction, is 56km network of dedicated cycle paths that will criss-cross the city to provide residents and visitors with safe and accessible cycling options. This project is the largest roll out of cycleways in one consecutive project in NSW.



Visitor economy profile

The Wagga Wagga LGA attracts about 1.2 million visitors annually, made up of 750,000 daytrips (63%), and 438,000 overnight and international visitors (37%).

The visitor economy contributes about \$374 million annually in direct expenditure to the Wagga Wagga LGA, which is largely driven by overnight visitor spend, with an average of \$182 per visit. The spend per daytrip visitor is higher than the Riverina and regional New South Wales average spend. In comparison, the spend per overnight visitor is slightly higher than the Riverina but marginally lower than regional New South Wales.



Figure 3

Visitor economy snapshot

1.2m \$374m

Visitors

Visitor spend

Day trip Overnight International

Visitors

750K (63%)	430.5K (36%)	7.5K (1%)
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Spend per visitor*

\$182 WWCC	\$414	\$998
\$153 Riverina	\$372	\$1.1K
\$114 Regional NSW	\$487	\$965

Key visitor trends for the Wagga Wagga LGA include:

77% of visitors to Wagga Wagga are from NSW.

37% of overnight visitors to Wagga Wagga are solo travellers who predominantly travel for business.

A majority of visitors travelled to visit friends and relatives (VFR) in Wagga Wagga (44%). These visitors were primarily adult couples, family groups or friends / relatives travelling together with children.

The age profile of Wagga Wagga visitors is weighted to people aged 55+ years (38%).

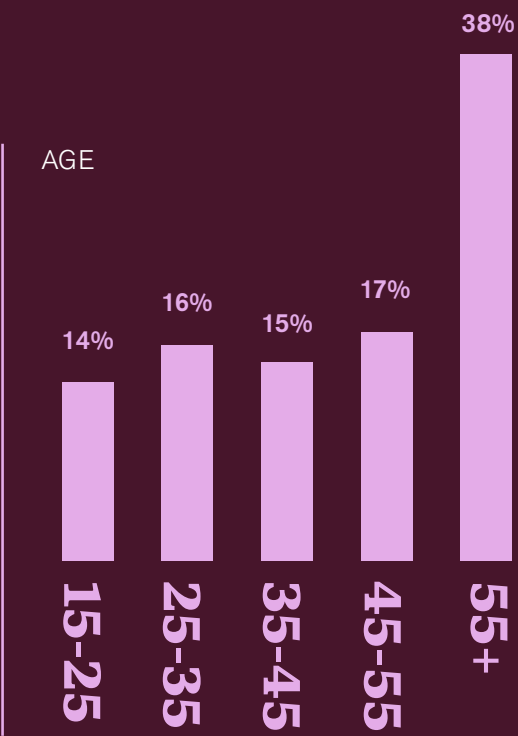
More than half of visitors to Wagga Wagga visited a restaurant or café during their stay (69%).

A large percentage of visitors come to the city for a wide range of events including defence force march out parades, conferences, sporting and cultural events, weddings, and graduation ceremonies at Charles Sturt University.

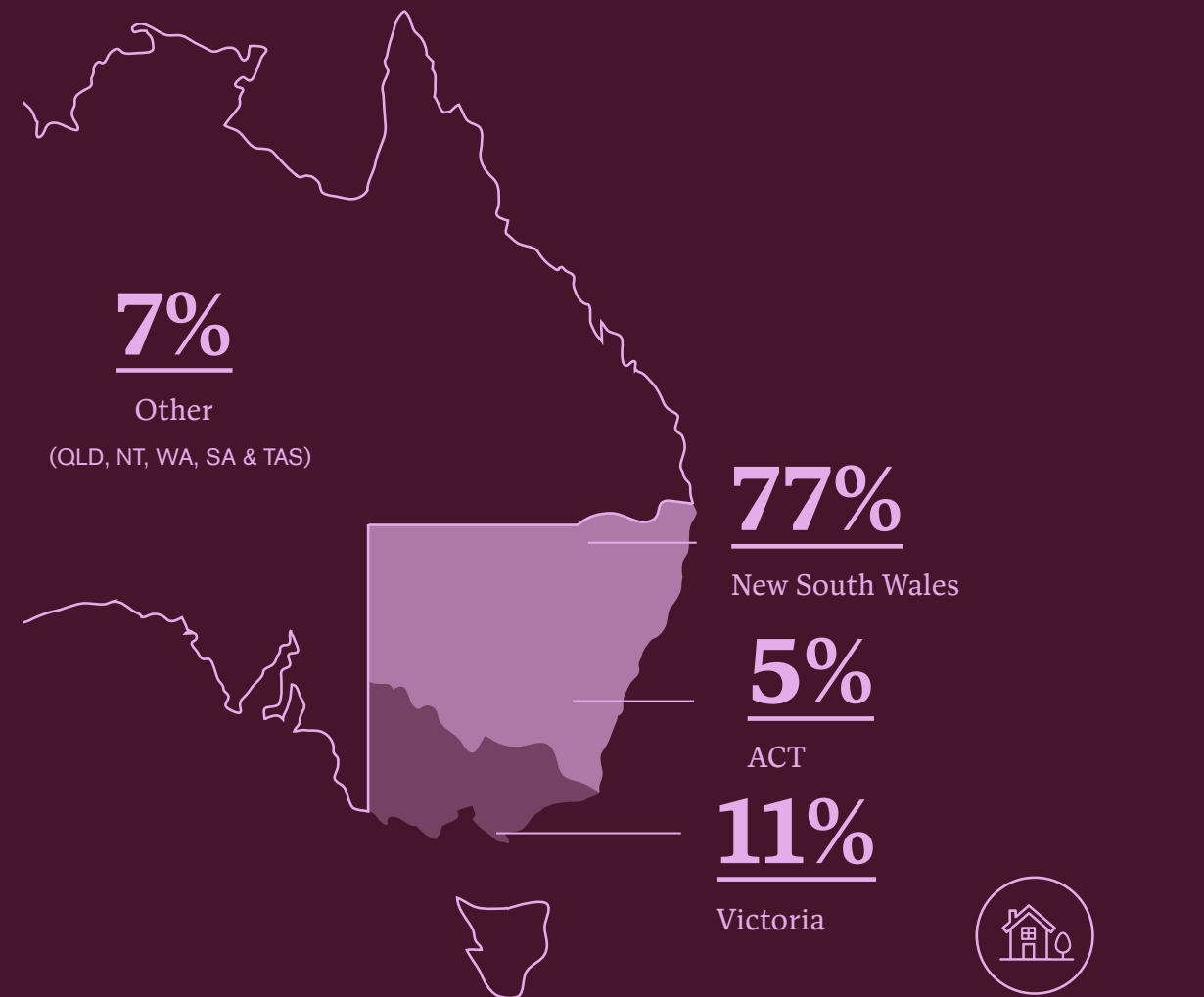
Figure 3 Source: National and International Visitor Survey Ave 2018-2022, Tourism Research Australia (TRA), 2023, and Wagga Wagga City Council visitor economy forecasting 2024. Please Note: Figures have been rounded to the nearest 100. *Spend data is based on of a four-year average 2016-2019.

Figure 4

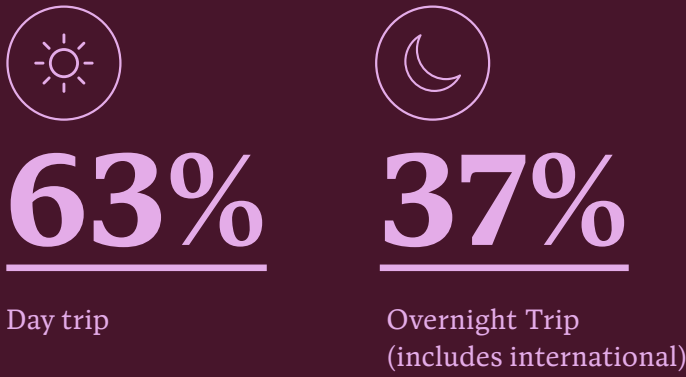
Visitor profile



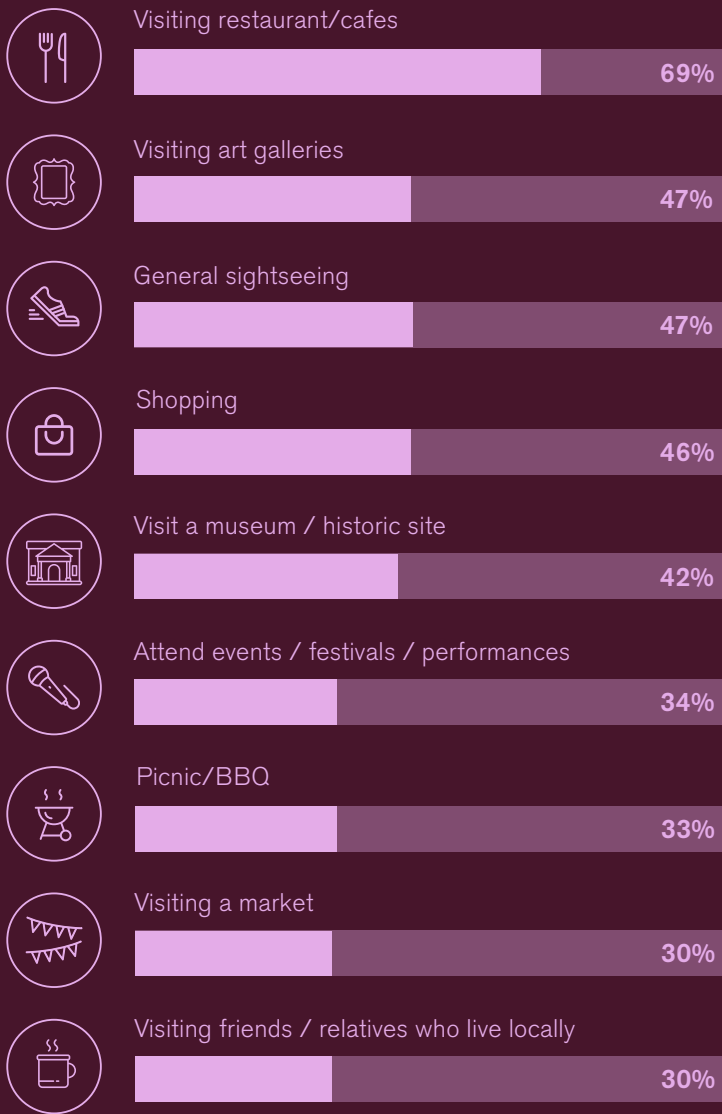
VISITOR ORIGIN



TRIP LENGTH

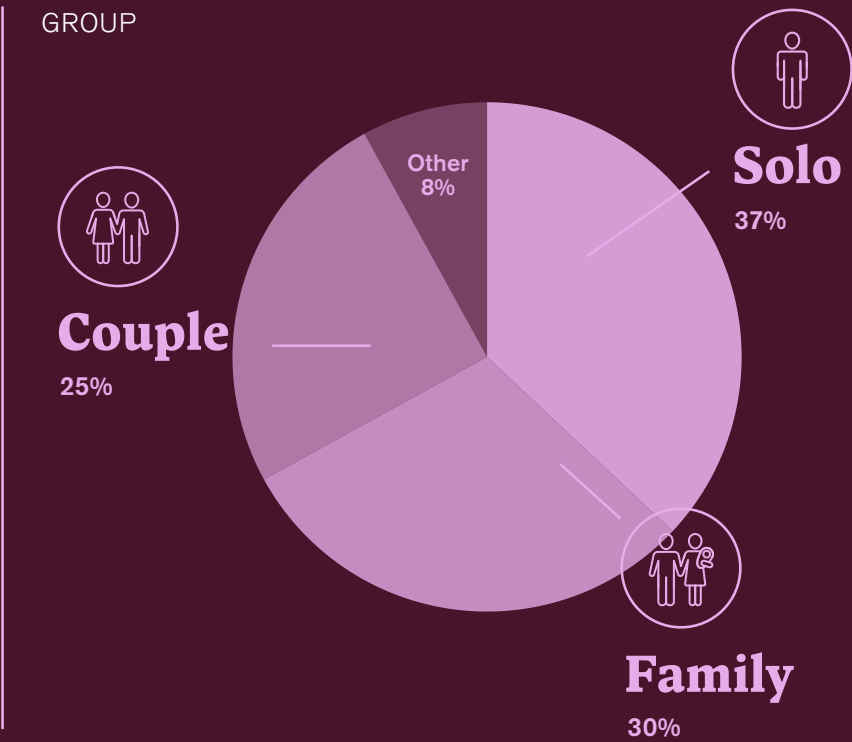


ACTIVITY PROFILE

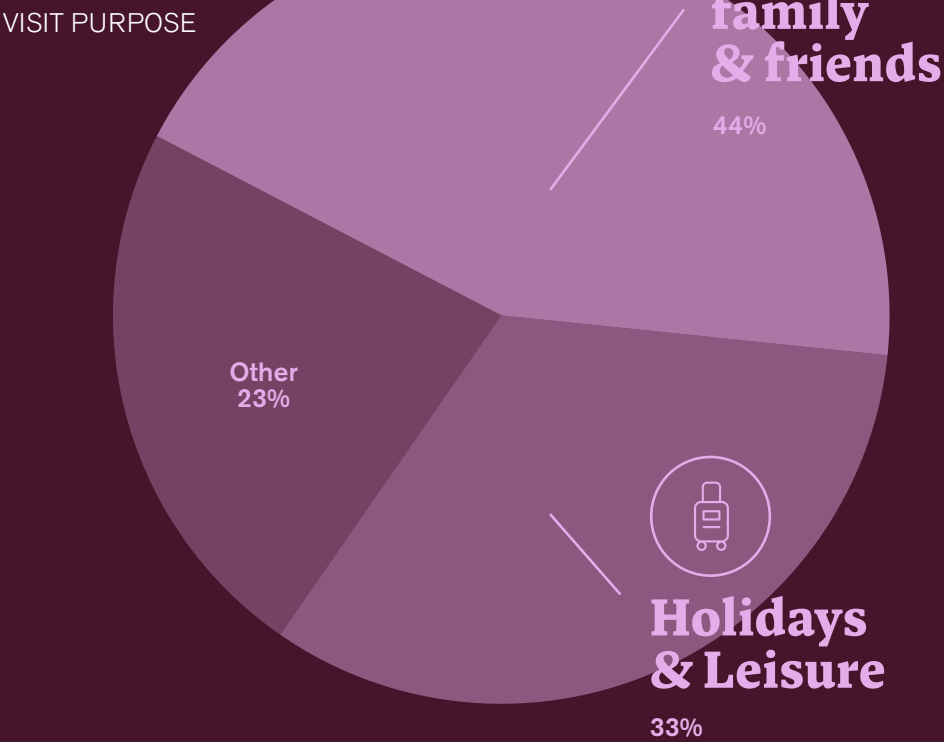


Source: National and International Visitor Survey Ave 2018-2022, TRA, 2023.
Please Note: Figures have been rounded to the nearest 100. Activity Profile Data is derived from the Past Visitor Focus Group Survey conducted by Urban Enterprise in 2023.

GROUP



VISIT PURPOSE



Our visitor economy ambitions

Visitation projections forecast that the LGA will see an additional 350,000 visitors over the next 10 years, with visitation expected to reach 1.55 million by 2035.

Figure 5 provides forecast visitation for the Wagga Wagga LGA. This is based on economic forecasting conducted by Wagga Wagga City Council, considering data from Tourism Research Australia (TRA), and other local datasets to develop a bottom-up approach. Council identified the catalytic reason for overnight travel from the narrower purpose of travel designated under the TRA methodology.

Data was collected from 64 events which required overnight accommodation in 2023/24. These included sporting, festival and conference events, and where they identified their place of origin and choice of stay, such as commercial accommodation or staying with friends or relatives. Overnight visitation necessitated by FIFO, medical treatment, and business travel (seven categories in total) were also added.

The bottom-up data was quality tested using supply-side data from STR on Wagga Wagga accommodation bookings and occupancy.

The scenarios presented in Figure 5 apply the following growth rates and assumptions:

- Sport – 3% from 2026
- Events – 4% from 2027
- Medical treatment –1.5% from 2025
- Business (regular) – 5% from 2028
- Business (major projects) – one worker visits 48 times per year, peaking in 2028
- Holiday (includes international) – 5% from 2026
- VFR/Other – 4% from 2027
- Daytrips – 1.5% to 2035

Daytrip modelling included the historic annual visitation and population growth rates of regional NSW, with the assumption of a 1.5% growth rate applied.

Ultimately, the Wagga Wagga region expects to see a growth to 883,462 daytrip visitors and 668,075 overnight visitors by 2035.

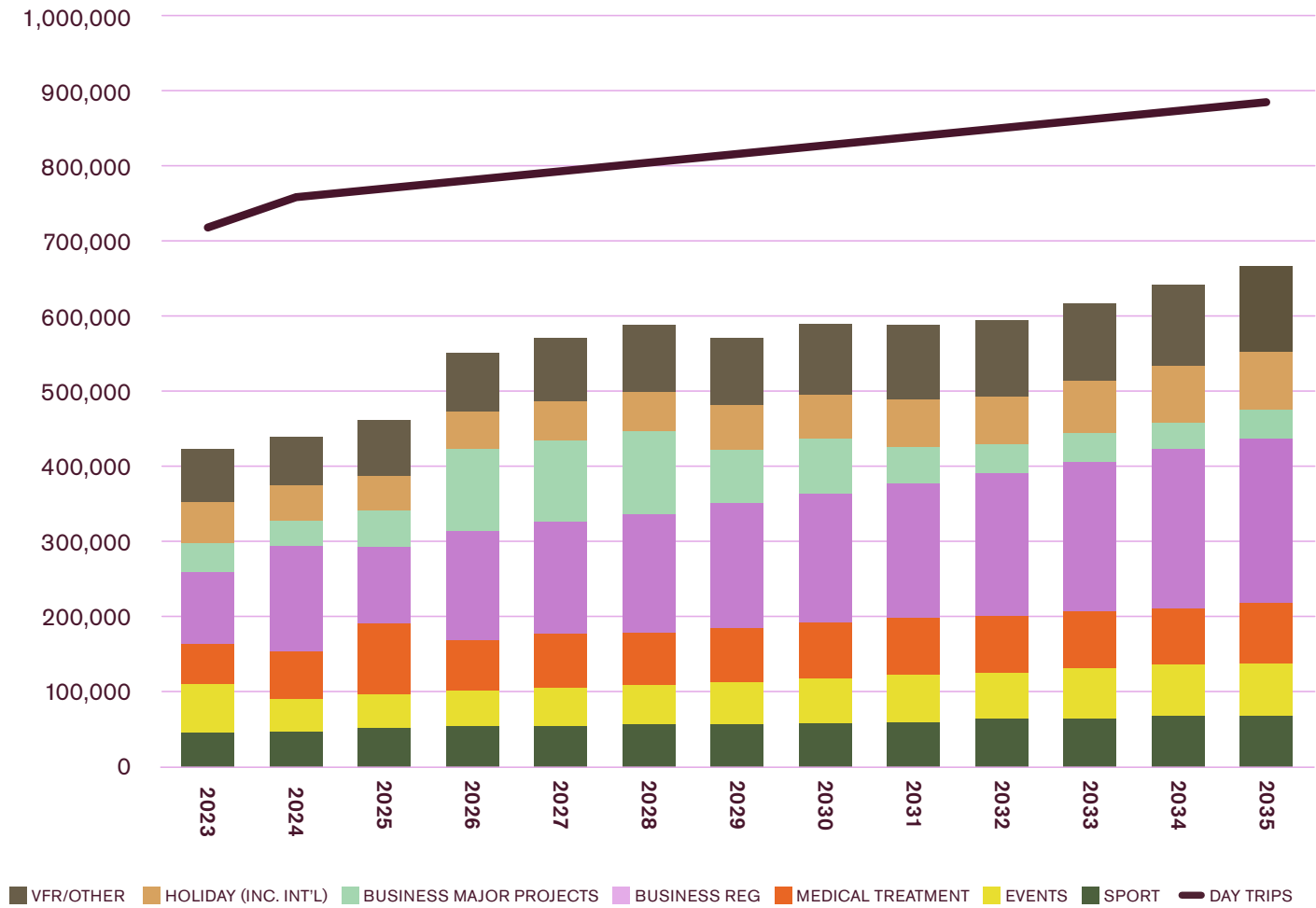
Introducing new products and improvements to the visitor experience in the region, elevating the marketing presence for the region, and obtaining public and private investment, will impact the forecast and see a higher and faster growth in visitation and overnight stays.

For example, increasing the bed inventory with the development of new accommodation options, such as a commercial hotel and/or holiday park, will have significant impact on the visitation projections. Other impacts on accommodation include housing availability, and an increase in transient workers to support major infrastructure projects over the next 5–10 years.

It is important to note that forecast growth does not consider macroeconomic impacts such as recession and cost of living pressures impacting on leisure travel.

Figure 5

Visitor Forecast by Primary Driver (2023-2035)



OVERNIGHT	2023	2024	2025	2026	2027	2028	2029	2030	2031	2032	2033	2034	2035
SPORT	50,000	47,000	50,000	52,000	53,560	55,167	56,822	58,526	60,282	62,091	63,953	65,872	67,848
EVENTS	45,000	42,000	45,000	50,000	52,000	54,080	56,243	58,493	60,833	63,266	65,797	68,428	71,166
MEDICAL TREATMENT	65,000	67,500	68,513	69,540	70,583	71,642	72,717	73,807	74,915	76,038	77,179	78,337	79,512
BUSINESS REG	150,000	135,000	130,000	143,000	150,000	157,500	165,375	173,644	182,326	191,442	201,014	211,065	221,618
BUSINESS MAJOR PROJECTS	36,500	36,500	50,000	109,500	109,500	109,500	73,000	73,000	50,000	36,500	36,500	36,500	36,500
HOLIDAY (INCLUDES INT'L)	55,000	45,000	45,000	50,000	52,500	55,125	57,881	60,775	63,814	67,005	70,355	73,873	77,566
VFR / OTHER	73,500	65,000	75,000	80,000	83,200	86,528	89,989	93,589	97,332	101,226	105,275	109,486	113,865
TOTAL OVERNIGHT	425,000	438,000	463,513	554,040	571,343	589,542	572,027	591,835	589,502	597,567	620,073	643,560	668,075
DAYTRIPS	720,000	750,000	761,250	772,669	784,259	796,023	807,963	820,082	832,384	844,869	857,542	870,406	883,462
TOTAL VISITORS	1,195,000	1,188,000	1,224,763	1,326,709	1,355,602	1,385,565	1,379,990	1,411,917	1,421,885	1,442,437	1,477,615	1,513,966	1,551,537

Product and experience profile

TOURISM PRODUCT PROFILE

This product and experience assessment is a strategic review of the Wagga Wagga region’s current experience offering.

The review included existing inventories, physical visitor information, site visits, consultation findings, and desktop research, including Australian Tourism Data Warehouse (ATDW) listings of products, experiences, events, and accommodation. This research identified more than 200 products available in the Wagga Wagga region.

Existing strengths within the Wagga Wagga LGA include food, wine and ferments (38%), arts and culture (12%), and nature-based products (8%). There is a gap in the provision of tours and transport, history, spa and wellness and cultural attractions, making up less than 8% of the overall tourism product.

Existing strengths include:

- Food, wine and ferments
- Sporting infrastructure
- Arts and culture
- Nature-based products

Emerging strengths include:

- First Nations
- Cycling
- Agritourism and culinary

Existing products that can be leveraged to improve the offering of the emerging strengths include:

- Marrambidya Wetland
- Murrumbidgee River
- Pomingalarna Reserve
- Livingstone National Park
- Existing and emerging agritourism businesses



Our existing hero products



Arts and Culture

Wagga Wagga Art Gallery showcases local and nationally recognised artists and exhibitions that explore creative and experimental art forms. The National Art Glass Gallery holds a significant collection of over 400 pieces, hosting regular exhibitions of renowned glass artists each year. The Museum of the Riverina and Wagga Wagga Civic Theatre are also significant attractions in the arts and culture sector.



Nature

Wagga Wagga offers a diverse range of nature-based attractions, including riverside precincts, nature reserves, and a National Park, all of which have further potential to be developed into iconic products in the region. Key attractions in the LGA include the Wiradjuri Trail and Riverside: Wagga Beach, which ranked in Australia's top 10 beaches in 2020.



Cycling

Wagga Wagga is a cyclist's destination, ranked #1 in NSW and #7 in Australia by PeopleForBikes' City Ratings for amenability to cycling. The city boasts an extensive network of active travel pathways, a BMX track, velodrome, and diverse mountain bike trails. The construction of the Multisport Complex in 2022 has further strengthened the city's status, offering facilities for both professional cycling events and public recreational biking, including road, gravel, and mountain biking options. The city hosts multiple destination cycling events such as Gears and Beers. However, opportunities exist to further grow this market.



Food and Drink

The city boasts a strong cluster of leading culinary experiences. This is bolstered by a supply of exceptional and diverse local produce that gastronomically tells the story of the region.

Tourism product gaps



Cycling activations

Cycling tourism is developing. There is an opportunity to grow this market through further activations and attracting major cycling events.

Product gaps: There is potential for cycling to be further activated in the city with the support of developing further infrastructure or activations which will encourage use of the existing cycling infrastructure in the city.

Product opportunities: There is a combination of infrastructure and amenities required to service the cycling market. Projects such as the attraction of major cycling events to the Multipurpose Cycling Complex at Pomingalarna Reserve, the installation of cycling infrastructure such as bike racks, water stations, and shared user paths, as well as offering access to equipment hire or guided tours, all contribute to the attractiveness of the city as a connected cycling destination.

Case study image: Blue Mountains Biking Adventures, NSW



Tours and transport

Bookable, organised tours are limited in the region as there are very few tour operators. There are some informal tours operating that primarily serve the community and education market.

Product gaps: There is a need to develop bookable experiences based on product strengths such as food and wine, history and heritage, nature and agritourism, water and First Nations. These can be sold in advance, promoted to a wider audience including groups, and sold for commission on the international stage.

Product opportunities: With the Wiradjuri Trail connected to the CBD there are walking tour opportunities, some of which take place informally already. Embracing the smaller townships and agritourism products by developing small group boutique tours would attract food enthusiasts and provide a paddock-to-plate experience. Taking advantage of natural assets provides the perfect setting for pop-up recreation and equipment hire to engage visitors in these spaces.

Case study image: Amazing Co Mystery Picnics, VIC



Activations of waterways

Many visitors do not have personal watercraft to enjoy the hero asset of Wagga Wagga – the water. To capitalise on this and give visitors the chance to connect with the water, temporary access to watercraft hire services, boardwalks, and experience infrastructure is essential.

Product gaps: Opportunities exist for seasonal watercraft hire at strategic locations such as Lake Albert and Riverside: Wagga Beach. Items such as small boats, kayaks, and stand-up paddleboards (SUP) would allow visitors to enjoy the water experiences and potentially increase their length of stay and spend.

Product opportunities: Taking advantage of the accessibility at Riverside: Wagga Beach, a pop-up inflatable hire and kayak/SUP hire would be attractive to visitors during the warmer months. Encouraging small boat usage for fishing and sightseeing could be more suited as an all-year-round activity, with mooring facilities in multiple locations to allow connectivity with land attractions.

Case study image: Echuca Moama Stand Up Paddle SUP, VIC & NSW

A gap analysis was undertaken for Wagga Wagga tourism products to identify gaps and opportunities:



Sites of First Nations Significance

Wagga Wagga has a strong connection to country and the Wiradjuri people. There is passion and commitment to showcase the First Nations story to visitors.

Product gaps: There is currently very limited products available that showcase the First Nations story of Wagga Wagga.

Product opportunities: The creation of an attraction such as the proposed Cultural Centre would provide a hub for First Nations storytelling and a place to showcase art and artefacts. This site would provide inspiration for product development and would be enhanced by the engagement and support of First Nations groups to deliver tourism education and training programs.

Case study image: Ngaran Ngaran Culture Awareness, NSW



Accommodation

Accommodation in Wagga Wagga is one dimensional, predominantly focused on traditional hotel/motel room styles, with an average of three beds.

Product gaps: There is limited access to self-contained accommodation that encourages increased length of stay. There are also gaps in caravan and camping, and medium to high level quality accommodation. Luxury and boutique stays are a significant gap with little to none in the market.

Product opportunities: There is the opportunity to link experience and accommodation such as agritourism and luxury/boutique accommodation, including tiny homes and glamping. A resort for caravan and camping would be a drawcard for the family market and would increase self-contained options in Wagga Wagga, therefore encouraging an increased length of stay and yield. A high-density hotel in close proximity to the city centre would also service the business corporate visitor and those attending events.

Case study image: Del Rio Riverside Resort, Wisemans Ferry, NSW



New icons and emerging products

The region has a collection of existing known products, but nothing iconic that is only found in Wagga Wagga.

Product gaps: A lack of iconic products or drawcard attractions means Wagga Wagga is not front of mind, particularly for the leisure market, leading to missed opportunities and economic leaks for the region.

Product opportunities: The establishment of a unique Wagga Wagga product, through private and/or government investment, that provides a 'must visit' reason for visitors is needed. Opportunities include:

- A uniquely designed lookout
- A multi-day walk or cycle experience in partnership with neighbouring regions, combined with unique accommodation
- An interactive river activation
- Iconic visitor infrastructure such as staircase challenges, zip lines, and tree top walks.

Case study image: Granite Skywalk, Castle Rock, WA

Challenges and opportunities

Challenges and opportunities for Wagga Wagga that inform the Plan’s strategic framework.



Challenges

Murrumbidgee River

Investment is needed in the Murrumbidgee River for activation and experience creation.

Fragmented tourism industry

There is a need to encourage and facilitate collaboration through a variety of programs and initiatives.

Slow agritourism development

Agritourism businesses can be limited by statutory planning parameters, worker shortages, and transport connections.

Workforce shortages

There is a need for more workers across all industries but it is most prevalent in hospitality/agritourism businesses.

Limited transport options

Transport options are needed to support visitors and workforce, both within the city and to-and-from surrounding rural villages, townships and cities.

Need for a large conference facility

Currently the city is unable to compete with other regions to attract business and major events losing opportunities to host regular events, which has a flow on effect to the local economy.

Market-ready First Nations products

The strong First Nations connection and story has limited visibility in the city, and there are limited experiences accessible to visitors.

Lack of identity

Wagga Wagga lacks an identity as a tourism destination. There is conflict between being a regional city versus a country town.

The future of the Wagga Wagga Airport

The uncertainty for the future operation of Wagga Wagga Airport limits the potential to attract additional carriers that open opportunities for new routes, and increase frequency of existing routes.

Lack of accommodation

The lack of accommodation, and accessible accommodation in particular, poses a challenge to increasing visitation, yield, and the attraction of new markets. This impacts the ability to accommodate events and business attendees.

Need to diversify accommodation

An audit of the LGA's commercial accommodation identified that 81% of stock is classified as hotels and motels, with a small proportion of camping, unique stay, and self-contained apartment accommodation (19%). Options for visitors are limited and constrained by capacity.

Opportunities

Murrumbidgee River

There is opportunity to improve the connection and access to the Murrumbidgee River particularly from the CBD.

Destination events

Purposefully create events that can be accommodated within the existing infrastructure.

First Nations products

A positive and strong desire from local Traditional Owners can be fostered to develop First Nations products and experiences within the region.

Visitor Information Centre

There is an opportunity to review the expansion of the Visitor Information Centre to elevate the presence, improve the facility, and increase visitation. This review would consider ideal locations in both co-located and stand-alone settings.

Wagga Wagga Airport

To inject more visitors into the region, further investment into the airport will be required in order to attract new airline routes, increase airline services, and improve the overall visitor experience as a significant gateway to the city and wider region.

Iconic attractions

A hero attraction opportunity exists to create something iconically Wagga Wagga. For example an iconic lookout, major walking experience, or tree top walk.



Arts and culture

Investment in contemporary arts and cultural infrastructure is critical to the continued growth of the city. The proposed development of a major Entertainment/ Convention Centre, First Nations Cultural Centre, and the expansion of the Wagga Wagga Civic Theatre will provide increased access to arts, entertainment and cultural experiences for visitors.

Agritourism and culinary experiences

There is opportunity to develop more agritourism attractions and experiences, with a range of producers demonstrating interest in diversifying into the tourism sector. There is the potential to strengthen the existing and new food and drink operators to showcase regional products and develop bookable experiences.

Riverside: Wagga Beach

There is opportunity to further develop and activate riverside locations, including Wagga Beach. Recognition has already been achieved from the national ranking and could be leveraged further.

Nature Experiences

Base level nature experiences exist that could be elevated to become drawcards for the region, e.g. Wagga Wagga Botanic Gardens and Willans Hill, Marrambidya Wetland, Livingstone National Park, and the Wiradjuri Trail.

Cycle Tourism

Existing assets can be leveraged to increase cycling visitation, and more development of tracks and trails in the LGA to assist connectivity and dispersal.

Our Unique Story

Tourism marketing opportunities exist to create a unique brand identity for the city that shares Wagga Wagga's unique story that will increase visitation and destination awareness.



Target markets

By identifying and catering to key target markets, Wagga Wagga can effectively leverage the city’s strengths and attractions to drive tourism growth and dispersal, enhance visitor experiences, and contribute to the local economy.



Based on research and data, the following primary and secondary target markets have been identified:

PRIMARY TARGET MARKET

Independent lifestyle

Existing travellers primarily from the ACT, Sydney, and Regional NSW who are visiting for a short-trip or specific reason (health, business, day trippers, VFR) and have flexibility to extend or return for leisure to participate in tourism-based experiences, which will maximise visitor spend per person.

Who they are:

- Not limited by dependent children
- Generally aged 30-60 (not an age but a mindset)
- Mostly from Sydney, Regional NSW (especially The Murray, Snowy Mountains, Riverina), and the ACT
- Likely to travel mid-week and extend their stay into the weekend
- Seeking a destination where they can immerse in nature, indulge in their passions, and discover hidden gems.

Where they stay:

- Self-contained
- Resort
- Hotel/motels
- Unique stays

SECONDARY TARGET MARKETS

Touring

Inspired by the freedom of touring, this market wants to explore the country and see new destinations

Who they are:

- Mostly NSW (82 per cent) and VIC (11 per cent)
- Taking longer trips, less frequently
- Young couples, friends, families with older children, grey nomads

Where they stay:

- Free camping
- Self-contained
- Motel
- Serviced apartment / unit

Explorers and discovers

Socially conscious and adventurous travellers, open to travelling to new destinations and seeking new, unique experiences.

Who they are:

- Young families and singles, mostly aged 18-40
- Mostly from Regional NSW and the ACT
- Low-middle income earners
- Travel on weekends and more frequently throughout the year

Where they stay:

- Self-contained
- Resort
- Unique stays

Luxury traveller

Inspired by the freedom of touring, this market wants to explore the country and see new destinations with a penchant for quality and indulgence.

Who they are:

- Mostly older travellers, predominantly couples
- Higher income
- Likely to travel midweek or any time of the year
- Often drive or fly in from a capital city or nearby location

Where they stay:

- Self-contained
- Resort
- Luxury hotel
- Unique stays

Visiting friends and relatives

Travellers visiting to reconnect and spend time with loved ones and who are eager to explore and discover the region.

Who they are:

- Not limited by geography and instead have direct ties and connections to residents
- Visiting during school holidays
- Majority of overnight stays
- Adult couples, solo travellers, and families with children

Where they stay:

- Friends or relatives' property

Strategic framework

Wagga Wagga is a leading regional destination, celebrated for its connection to country and vibrant expression of modern Australian character.

WAGGA WAGGA BASELINE VISITATION AND SPEND (2024)

1.2m

Visitors

\$374m

Visitor spend

OUR 2035 VISITOR ECONOMY AMBITIONS

1.55m

Annual visitors +350k growth

668k

🌙 Annual overnight visitors +230k growth

883k

⚙️ Annual day trips

The objectives of this plan:

- Transform Wagga Wagga into a recognised regional holiday leisure destination
- Grow the value of the visitor economy by attracting overnight visitors, increasing visitor yield, and strategic tourism investment
- Develop a clear destination promise of the Wagga Wagga experience that is understood by key target markets, achieved through upskilling and developing tourism businesses
- Deliver innovative visitor servicing to meet the diverse needs of Wagga Wagga's key target markets
- Establish a well-connected industry to realise Wagga Wagga's visitor economy potential
- Deliver compelling and motivational products and experiences through investment in key identified areas, including First Nations, Agritourism and culinary, Water and nature, and Creativity, culture and place

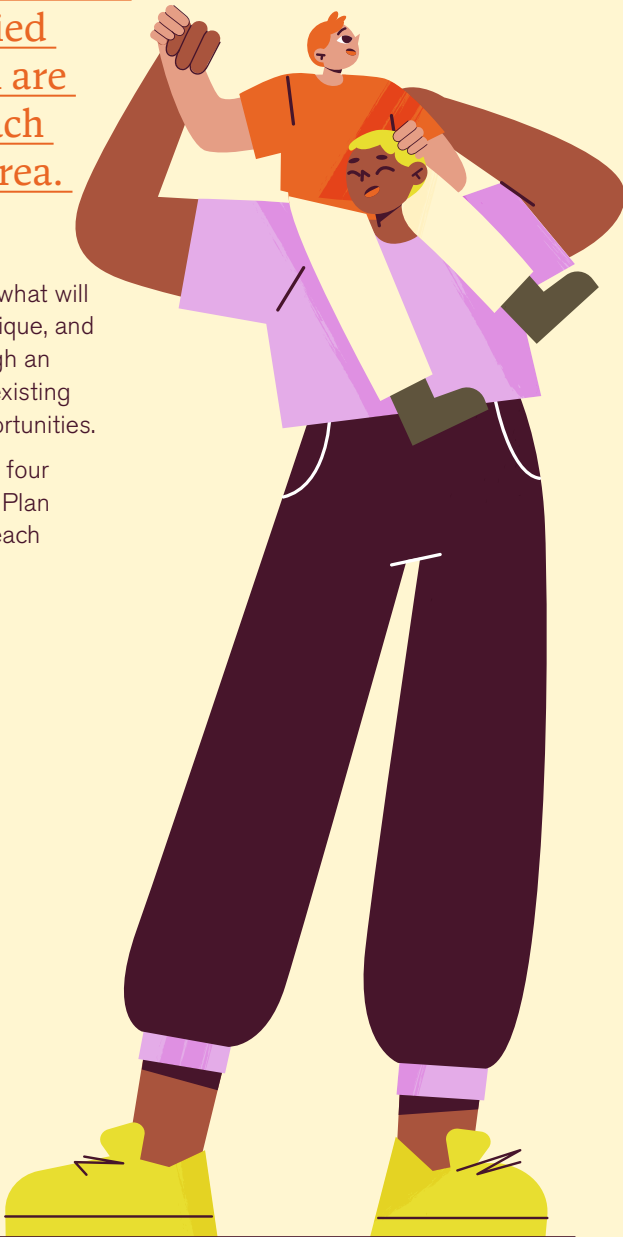
The objectives of this plan include the delivery of compelling and motivational products and experiences in key identified areas such as nature.

Destination themes

Four destination themes have been identified in the Plan, which are embedded into each Strategic Focus Area.

These themes clearly define what will make Wagga Wagga truly unique, and have been determined through an analysis of Wagga Wagga's existing strengths and emerging opportunities.

These themes are across the four Strategic Focus Areas of the Plan followed by action plans for each Strategic Focus Area.



First Nations

Empower Traditional Owners to take the lead in creating products and experiences that foster education and business development opportunities for First Nations community.

Visitor demand for First Nations experiences is strong, particularly in regional areas, and provides an opportunity to share stories and highlight the rich culture, history, and contemporary experiences of Australia's Traditional Owners.

From a destination perspective, Wagga Wagga is well positioned as a gateway to explore Wiradjuri Country. The city has already invested in key visitor offerings, including the Wiradjuri Trail, Wiradjuri language courses at Charles Sturt University, and a commitment to construct a First Nations Cultural Centre as part of Riverside: Stage 3 Plan.



Agritourism and culinary

Work with agriculture and hospitality businesses to build capacity and advance the development of agritourism and culinary products and experiences in the region.

Wagga Wagga is home to many emerging agritourism and hospitality businesses that are strengthening the region's reputation as a culinary destination from paddock to plate. To support this growth, businesses would benefit from practical opportunities, such as training and development programs that can assist them to continue to grow, as well as encourage new agritourism investments.



Water and nature

Attract and initiate water-based activities focusing on the Murrumbidgee River, and Lake Albert and enrich existing nature-based products.

The opportunity for visitors to fully engage with Wagga Wagga's water assets is currently hindered by accessibility limitations and a lack of availability of suitable infrastructure. There is significant potential to enhance visitor attractions particularly in warmer months, which are generally lower visitation periods. Investing in nature-based assets to establish attractions, such as an iconic lookout, or major walking experience, will attract nature-based visitors.



Creativity, culture and place

Revitalise the Wagga Wagga city centre by enhancing the streetscape and amenities, diversifying dining choices, unearthing arts and cultural experiences, and activating heritage sites.

Increasing visitor dwell time in the city centre will be achieved through the provision of vibrant and dynamic experiences that showcase Wagga Wagga's rich diversity and culture.

These strategic activations and enhancements will not only boost expenditure but will also enhance and support the arts and culture industries of the city, ultimately contributing to the city's vitality and economic growth.

Strategic focus areas

Four strategic focus areas have been identified to support and invest in Wagga Wagga’s visitor economy. This will enable Wagga Wagga and its surrounds to achieve the Plan’s vision and objectives.

The strategic focus areas identified for the Plan have been developed through investigation and assessment of both existing offerings and regional assets. A comprehensive consultation process was undertaken, involving key stakeholders, including industry representatives, past and prospective visitors, and local community members. This collaborative effort has defined the four focus areas, which align with the inherent strengths and opportunities of the region.



1
Product and experience development

Create accessible opportunities for tourism operators to develop and improve skills, collaborate, and network. Support activities that will create new and unique visitor experiences and create a positive legacy for the city.

2
Visitor infrastructure

Support the improvement, development, and provision of visitor economy infrastructure to enabling an increase in visitation and encouraging higher yield visitors to conveniently access the city.

3
Events and conferencing

Position Wagga Wagga as a leading regional events destination that offers a diverse, vibrant, and inclusive calendar of events that generate positive economic, cultural, social, and environmental outcomes for the city. Focus on support and growth of event visitation, taking into consideration the limitations and barriers affecting this sector.

4
Destination identity and marketing

Establish a destination identity that tells Wagga Wagga's unique story to inspire visitation. Deliver a consistent message across all platforms that positions Wagga Wagga as the capital of the Riverina region.

Where initiatives are not funded, these will be subject to approval through Council's Long Term Financial Plan budget and business planning processes or Council will endeavor to seek federal and state grant funding opportunities or collaborate with local stakeholders. Potential funding sources listed in this Plan include:

- **Existing/in-kind** - Council staff time and/or existing Council budget
- **Council GPR** - Council General Purpose Revenue
- **External Grants** - Council will endeavour to apply for state and federal grants.

This Plan outlines initiatives over two stages: 1-5 years and 5-10 years, unless specified otherwise under budget and costing considerations. A review of this Plan will take place in year 5 (2029/30) to assess incomplete action items from stage one for potential implementation in stage two.

The strategic focus areas identified for the Plan have been developed through the investigation and assessment of both existing offerings and regional assets.



Strategic Focus 1

Product and experience development

Create accessible opportunities for tourism operators to develop and improve skills, collaborate, and network. Support activities that will create new and unique visitor experiences and create a positive legacy for the city.

This strategic focus area is aimed at supporting and developing industry to enable growth in key sectors that will positively impact the overall visitor experience in our city.



Priority initiatives

Tourism Industry Development Program

In addition to the Wagga Wagga Tourism Partner Program, Council delivers a series of annual initiatives to develop and deliver capacity building for wider industry to stimulate the visitor economy.

Council will facilitate a targeted Tourism Industry Development Program which will enable businesses to be supported to develop, promote, and sell high-quality product, packages, and experiences that meet the needs of consumers and the tourism industry, drive visitation and expenditure, encourage repeat visitation and increase dispersal. This sector-based industry program will target local growth in key themes identified in this Plan.

Tourism and events annual grants

This action item is aimed at increasing funding support towards tourism and events initiatives in the LGA. A new tourism funding category in Council's Annual Grants program will support local tourism businesses to innovate, deliver high-quality visitor experiences, and achieve further marketing impact and reach to target key visitor markets.

Youth in tourism

Wagga Wagga's visitor economy industry is experiencing widespread skills and workforce shortages, particularly in the hospitality and agritourism sectors. Alongside key stakeholders, Council can play a facilitation role in enabling young people to experience careers in the tourism industry through work experience, job placement, traineeships and training programs. This will assist with succession planning within the industry to ensure there are minimal gaps in the visitor offering.

Agritourism destination event

To showcase the strength and diversity of agritourism businesses in the region, a destination event is proposed, inviting visitors to experience first-hand the local produce and agricultural offering. The key outcomes are to raise awareness of the agritourism businesses in the Wagga Wagga LGA, drive traffic directly to the business locations across the city and rural villages, and encourage dispersal, yield and repeat visitation.

STRATEGIC FOCUS 1 PRODUCT AND EXPERIENCE DEVELOPMENT					
Ref.	Initiatives	Timeframe	Stakeholders	Scope	Cost & funding status
PD01	Wagga Wagga Tourism Partner Program	Ongoing	Lead: Wagga Wagga City Council	Grow and enhance the Wagga Wagga Tourism Partner Program to meet the needs of the tourism industry and provide value to members. Deliver on the annual schedule of inclusions aligned to the program prospectus.	Income from membership fees
PD02	Tourism Industry Development Program	Ongoing	Lead: Wagga Wagga City Council	Develop an engaging annual Tourism Industry Development Program that is accessible to all tourism businesses in the Wagga Wagga LGA, with a key focus on building the destination themes. Offer industry growth and educational support through an annual schedule of activities to foster participation, innovation, and development. Encourage industry collaboration and cross promotion as part of the program. This will include a business referral program, industry familiarisations, and whole-of-industry networking events. By years 5 to 10 the program will establish a mentorship program tailored to provided one-on-one support for local tourism businesses.	Year 1 (2025/26) \$20,000 Council GPR funded ongoing. 2026/27 to 2029-30 additional \$20,000 pa to a target of \$80,000, unfunded.
PD03	Tourism and events annual grants	Ongoing	Lead: Wagga Wagga City Council	Increase funding support towards tourism events and initiatives. Establish a new tourism funding category in the Council's Annual Grants Program that supports tourism specific business initiatives, such as support for online booking platforms and collaborative marketing business initiatives.	Year 2 (2026/27) \$15,000 Council GPR unfunded. 2027/28 to 2029/30 additional \$15,000pa to a target of \$60,000, unfunded.
PD04	Enhance and develop cycling and trail experiences	Ongoing	Lead: Wagga Wagga City Council Support: Crown Lands	Assess all walking and cycling tracks and trails within the Wagga Wagga LGA, focusing on their usability and connectivity to the city. This audit will determine priorities for enhancements and the identification of any new linkages to connect visitor experiences across the city and rural villages. Create targeted cycling itineraries aligning to unique experiences and themes within the city, and connections to rural villages in the LGA.	Project to be scoped and costed Unfunded (sources: Council GPR and external grants)
PD05	Youth in tourism	1 – 5 years	Lead: Wagga Wagga City Council Support: TAFE NSW, University providers	Facilitate employment and training pathways for young people interested in careers in tourism. Enable young people to experience careers in the tourism industry through work experience, job placement, traineeships, and training programs.	WWCC operational budget, existing/ in-kind

Ref.	Initiatives	Timeframe	Stakeholders	Scope	Cost & funding status
PD06	Seasonal leisure and recreational activities	1 – 5 years	Lead: Wagga Wagga City Council	Conduct a review of Council-owned land to identify underutilised water and nature-based recreation areas that have potential to attract more visitors through activations. Review policy settings to facilitate opportunities for recreational equipment hire and tourism operators on Council-owned land to enhance the visitor experience at nature and water-based attractions. Pursue funding opportunities to provide supporting infrastructure to enable these activities.	WWCC operational budget, existing/ in-kind.
PD07	CBD placemaking activations	1 – 5 years	Lead: Wagga Wagga City Council Support: CBD business traders	Introduce innovative street level activities that engage users and build atmosphere aligning to the outcomes in the CBD Masterplan Work with traders to create intriguing and vibrant activations that bring people to activity centres, encourage spending and increase dwell time, both day and night. Prioritise street infrastructure enhancements to enable more activations.	Year 1 (2025/26) \$500,000 grant funded
PD08	Agritourism planning support	1 – 5 years	Lead: Wagga Wagga City Council	Establish a service offering that supports and guides agritourism start-ups. Support would include the development of a self-assessment toolkit.	WWCC operational budget, existing/ in-kind
PD09	Agritourism precincts	5 – 10 years	Lead: Wagga Wagga City Council Support: Agritourism businesses, industry groups, rural village associations	Identify developing agritourism clusters and zones within the city and rural villages within the Wagga Wagga LGA. Identify opportunities for agritourism business development with a key focus on potential for rural villages. Develop agritourism themed itineraries to promote available visitor experiences and increase bookable experiences.	WWCC operational budget, existing/ in-kind
PD10	Unlock hidden gems	5 – 10 years	Lead: Wagga Wagga City Council Support: Tourism Partner Program members	Activate heritage assets and undiscovered places by introducing pop up activities, itineraries, trails, and art installations to allow tourism businesses to establish in hidden spots in the city.	Project to be scoped and costed Unfunded (sources: Council GPR and external grants)

Ref.	Initiatives	Timeframe	Stakeholders	Scope	Cost & funding status
PD11	Build on the 7-day trade and CBD vibrancy	5 – 10 years	Lead: Wagga Wagga City Council Support: Arts and culture sector, NSW Government	Encourage opportunities for increased vibrancy in the CBD to generate activity throughout the day and night which encourages dwell time, extends length of stay, and increase spend aligning with the outcomes in the CBD Masterplan. This would include working with industry businesses, trading hours, creating unique spaces, and supporting live music culture.	Project to be scoped and costed Unfunded (sources: Council GPR and external grants)
PD12	Agritourism destination event	5 – 10 years	Lead: Wagga Wagga City Council	Develop an annual destination event that showcases the agritourism businesses in the region and encourages increased spend and dispersal of visitors throughout the region.	Year 4 (2028/29) \$100,000 Council GPR unfunded 2029/30 to 2032/33 additional \$62,500pa to a target of \$350,000, unfunded Funds to be used to leverage external grants

Strategic Links:

- Wagga Wagga Community Strategic Plan
- Riverina Murray Destination Management Plan
- NSW Visitor Economy Strategy

Strategic plans that will support deliverables in this pillar:

- CBD Masterplan
- Events Strategy and Action Plan



There is the potential to strengthen the existing and new food and drink operators to showcase regional product and develop bookable experiences.

Visitor infrastructure

Support the improvement, development, and provision of visitor economy infrastructure to enable an increase in visitation and encourage higher yield visitors to conveniently access the city.

The visitor experience can be impacted by the products and experiences encountered but also the infrastructure that supports visitors including transport, accommodation, accessibility, connectivity, and wayfinding. Wagga Wagga has varying levels of opportunity from minor infrastructure improvements, such as wayfinding signage, to major investment attraction and capital projects including accommodation and the development of a First Nations Cultural Centre.



Priority initiatives

Visitor servicing expansion

Visitor servicing is evolving with technology and changing visitor behaviours. Developing a visitor servicing plan will enable Council to align and adapt to these changes. Currently visitor services are delivered through the Visitor Information Centre and digital platforms including social media platforms and tourism websites. To achieve an efficient and effective approach to visitor servicing, the development of this plan will inform the future evolution of visitor services in Wagga Wagga.

Accommodation investment attraction

Wagga Wagga regularly experiences high occupancy rates as a result of strong and consistent visitation across all sectors. On average, hotel occupancy is 78% year-round, with occupancy regularly peaking at 90% in line with the city's major events program. Based on visitor feedback the city has very limited accommodation offerings predominantly catering for traditional style hotel/motel accommodation. The existing supply of accommodation is inadequate to meet the current and future demands and expectations of visitors. Significant investment is needed to improve and expand the accommodation supply to meet this demand.

Wayfinding and visitor movement plan

Wagga Wagga's existing tourism wayfinding and signage is underdeveloped and limits the dispersal of visitors throughout the city. This creates a lack of awareness of attractions and experiences in the city leading to missed economic opportunities. The development of a Wayfinding and Visitor Movement Plan will connect attractions across the LGA. To develop the plan, an audit of existing signage will take place to identify redundant and confusing signs and will take into consideration any new branding identity for the city.

City gateway and precinct signage

The current visitor arrival experience to Wagga Wagga and rural villages is underwhelming and provides little direction for the visitor. To improve the visitor arrival experience and wayfinding to key precincts in the city, gateway signage needs to be redesigned and installed in key locations that are useful and relevant to visitors. This project will align with the new destination branding created for the city.

Iconic infrastructure plan

Wagga Wagga lacks a drawcard attraction that is iconic to the region and attracts leisure visitors to the city. An iconic infrastructure plan will be developed with key opportunities for infrastructure that complements existing water and nature-based attractions exclusive to Wagga Wagga, establishing the city as a destination that visitors can't afford to miss. Iconic visitor infrastructure could include a unique lookout, walking experiences, or river activations.

National collections precinct

The Australian Cultural and Conservation Precinct will deliver a national hub for the preservation, conservation and sharing of our national cultural heritage with the ancillary goals of education and employment. The project considers the current challenges of storing Australia's continuously growing national collections and proposes a purpose-built solution to position the Riverina as a significant cultural destination, empowering First Nations, while enhancing cultural awareness and understanding.

First Nations Cultural Centre

Co-designed with the Wiradjuri community, the project responds to the identified need for investment in cultural infrastructure to protect, preserve and share First Nations culture.

Advocacy

- Council will continue to advocate the importance of the Wagg a Wagga Airport and the opportunity to attract additional routes that open opportunities for new routes and increase frequency of existing routes.
- In addition, council will advocate to state and federal government the importance of improved rail and road infrastructure and services, emphasising the economic and social contributions to the Wagga Wagga and surrounds region.

STRATEGIC FOCUS 2 VISITOR INFRASTRUCTURE					
Ref.	Initiatives	Timeframe	Stakeholders	Scope	Cost & funding status
VD01	First Nations Keeping Place Facility and Cultural Centre	1 – 5 years	Jointly led: Wiradjuri community and Wagga Wagga City Council	Pursue state and federal funding opportunities to design and construct a First Nations Keeping Place and Cultural Centre, informed through the Riverside Stage 3 Business Case.	\$13.6M for construction (2024/25 costs) Unfunded (sources: external grants)
VD02	Visitor servicing expansion	1 – 5 years	Lead: Wagga Wagga City Council	Develop a visitor servicing plan that will identify future options for the Visitor Information Centre and the establishment of an agile visitor servicing program that meets visitors where they are, including events, transport hubs such as the airport, and key attractions during identified peak visitation periods. This will be supported with the development of a volunteer ambassador program. The plan will also identify locations to establish satellite information hubs across the city.	Project to be scoped and costed Unfunded (sources: Council GPR and external grants)
VD03	Attract accommodation investment	1 – 5 years	Lead: Wagga Wagga City Council Support: Destination NSW, RNSW, private investors	Develop an accommodation prospectus to attract accommodation investment into the city. Proactively seek accommodation investment to support the need for increased capacity in business and boutique accommodation, and other priority areas identified in the prospectus.	WWCC operational budget, existing/ in-kind
VD04	Wayfinding and visitor movement plan	1 – 5 years	Lead: Wagga Wagga City Council Support: Destination NSW, Transport for NSW	Develop a wayfinding and visitor movement plan that identifies connectivity and information gaps for visitors. This plan will include signage, wayfinding, and touring routes.	Year 2 (2026/27) \$120,000 Unfunded (sources: Council GPR and external grants)
VD05	City gateway and precinct signage	1 – 5 years	Lead: Wagga Wagga City Council Support: NSW Government	Renew the city's gateway and precinct signage to reflect the new destination branding for the LGA. This will include consideration of entry signs to all rural villages.	Year 3 (2027/28) Project to be scoped and costed Unfunded (sources: Council GPR and external grants)

Ref.	Initiatives	Timeframe	Stakeholders	Scope	Cost & funding status
VD06	Water access and viewing infrastructure	1 – 5 years	Lead: Wagga Wagga City Council Support: Murray Darling Basin Authority, Wagga Wagga Aboriginal Land Council	Investigate the feasibility of viewing and access infrastructure along the Murrumbidgee River, Marrambidya Wetland, Wollundry Lagoon and Lake Albert that will encourage visitors to extend dwell time within activity centres.	Project to be scoped and costed Unfunded (sources: Council GPR and external grants)
VD07	Iconic infrastructure plan	1 – 5 years	Lead: Wagga Wagga City Council Support: Murray Darling Basin Authority, NSW NPWS, Crown Lands, State Forestry, Aboriginal Land Council and other land managers	Establish an iconic infrastructure plan which complements existing water and nature-based attractions that will be exclusive to Wagga Wagga, establishing the city as a destination that visitors can't afford to miss. For example, iconic lookouts, boardwalks and tree top walk experiences.	Project to be scoped and costed Unfunded (sources: Council GPR and external grants)
VD08	Attract national collections and conservation agencies and infrastructure	1 – 5 years	Lead: Wagga Wagga City Council	Promote the opportunities for investment in national collections and conservation infrastructure in the Wagga Wagga LGA.	Project to be scoped and costed Unfunded (sources: Council GPR, external funding and grants)
VD09	Visitor amenity	5 – 10 years	Lead: Wagga Wagga City Council Support: NSW Government, rural village associations, Crown Lands	Invest in visitor amenity improvements across the LGA to ensure they are meeting the needs of all traveller types. This could include rest bays, accessible public toilets and changing places, caravan and RV parking, electric vehicle charging stations, and other contemporary visitor servicing facilities.	Project to be scoped and costed Unfunded (sources: Council GPR and external grants)

Strategic Links:

- Wagga Wagga Community Strategic Plan
- Wagga Wagga All Abilities Plan
- Wagga Wagga Cultural Plan
- Wagga Wagga Reconciliation Action Plan
- Riverina Murray Destination Management Plan
- NSW Visitor Economy Strategy 2030

Strategic plans that will support deliverables in this pillar:

- Lake Albert plan of management
- Marrambidya Wetland plan of management
- Bolton Park masterplan
- Draft Botanic Gardens masterplan
- Draft Wiradjuri Trail masterplan

Events and conferencing

Position Wagga Wagga as a leading regional events destination that offers a diverse, vibrant and inclusive calendar of events that generate positive economic, cultural, social and environmental outcomes for the city. Focus on support and growth of event visitation taking into consideration the limitations and barriers affecting this sector.

The city has a diverse portfolio of events throughout the year which are made up of cultural events and festivals, sporting and recreational events, and business events and conferencing.

Event visitors inject significant funds into the local economy and often become repeat visitors. Event infrastructure is developing in Wagga Wagga, with investment in sporting precincts and cultural facilities. However, more investment is required to attract major state, national and international events and programs which would bring significant economic benefits to the region and confirm Wagga Wagga as a leading events and leisure destination.



Priority initiatives

Activate Riverside: Wagga Beach precinct

Wagga Wagga City Council has recently invested in the development of the Riverside: Wagga Beach precinct which is inclusive of new recreational facilities and event spaces. This initiative would activate this precinct with a series of temporary pop up experiences and events during seasonal periods.

Civic Theatre expansion

The Civic Theatre Performing Arts Masterplan includes two additional performance and event spaces in addition to the current fixed-seat theatre, indoor/outdoor festival and concert options and a new bar overlooking the Wollundry Lagoon. This will increase the capacity of the theatre on any night from 491 to 1,500, boosting the night-time economy in a busy performing arts centre.

Events Strategy and Action Plan

A revision and renewal of the Wagga Wagga Events Strategy and Action Plan will provide a five-year framework and strategic approach to the development, acquisition and investment in events in the Wagga Wagga LGA. The strategy will position Wagga Wagga as a leading regional events destination that offers a diverse, vibrant and inclusive calendar of events that generates positive economic, cultural, social, and environmental outcomes for the city.

Major Convention/Entertainment Centre

Wagga Wagga City Council is pursuing the development of a major convention/entertainment centre located as part of the Riverside: Stage 3 development in the CBD. The project aims to address the need for enhanced infrastructure to develop leisure and business events, conferences and conventions and to activate the vision of Wagga Wagga as a leading events destination capable of hosting major events. The new build would enable a capacity of 5,000 people.

Sporting infrastructure improvements

The City of Wagga Wagga has a strong history of hosting elite and large-scale participation sporting events, which significantly contribute to the city's visitor economy. To further enhance our capacity to deliver a broader range of events at an even higher standard, several key sporting infrastructure improvements have been identified. These include the development of new sporting precincts, such as the Northern Sporting Precinct, and the renovation of existing facilities, like those outlined in the Bolton Park Masterplan.

STRATEGIC FOCUS 3 EVENTS AND CONFERENCING					
Ref.	Initiatives	Timeframe	Stakeholders Lead organisation	Scope	Cost & funding status
ED01	Event infrastructure improvements	Ongoing	Lead: Wagga Wagga City Council	Review key indoor and outdoor event spaces across the LGA and prioritise investment to increase usage.	WWCC operational budget, existing/ in-kind
ED02	Major Convention/ Entertainment Centre	1 – 5 years	Lead: Wagga Wagga City Council	Develop a business case to progress a major convention/entertainment centre as part of Riverside: Stage 3 Plan. Secure state and federal funding opportunities to develop detailed designs and construction.	Unfunded \$102.2M construction (2024/25 costs) Project unfunded (sources: Council GPR and external grants)
ED03	Civic Theatre Performing Arts Masterplan	1 – 5 years	Lead: Wagga Wagga City Council	Secure state and federal funding opportunities to develop detailed designs and construction as per the endorsed Civic Theatre Performing Arts Masterplan.	\$58.6M for construction (2024/25 costs) Project unfunded (sources: Council GPR and external grants)
ED04	Events Strategy and Action Plan	1 – 5 years	Lead: Wagga Wagga City Council	Revise and update the Events Strategy and Action Plan with consideration of this Plan.	WWCC operational budget, existing/ in-kind
ED05	Activate Riverside: Wagga Beach	1 – 5 years	Lead: Wagga Wagga City Council	Activate Riverside: Wagga Beach precinct by organising a series of pop up experiences and events during seasonal periods.	Unfunded Council GPR, \$100,000 from Year 2 (2026/27) ongoing Funds to be used to leverage external grants
ED06	Bolton Park Masterplan	1 – 5 years	Lead: Wagga Wagga City Council	Develop the Bolton Park Masterplan Redevelop Bolton Park Tennis Complex to attract regional, state, and national competitions	Masterplan \$150,000 funded Tennis Complex \$9.25M funded

Ref.	Initiatives	Timeframe	Stakeholders Lead organisation	Scope	Cost & funding status
ED07	Develop Lake Albert	1 – 10 years	Lead: Wagga Wagga City Council	Continue to develop Lake Albert and Apex Park precinct to enable water sports and events year-round. This includes a Lake Albert Plan of Management and remediation of the foreshore of Lake Albert.	Plan of management \$50,000 funded Remediation \$4.7M unfunded (sources: Council GPR and external grants)
ED08	Sporting infrastructure improvements	1 – 10 years	Lead: Wagga Wagga City Council	Prioritise infrastructure and grounds improvements of premier sporting precincts including McDonald's Park and Robertson Oval to enable night-time televised events. Establish a second rugby league field at McDonald's Park to attract state/national/ international sporting events. Develop a regional sporting facility to cater for the expanding northern growth area of Wagga Wagga.	\$ 2,393,000, unfunded (sources: Council GPR and external grants) \$874,000, unfunded (sources: Council GPR and external grants) \$5,079,000, funded

Strategic Links:

- Wagga Wagga Community Strategic Plan
- Wagga Wagga Cultural Plan
- Wagga Wagga Reconciliation Action Plan
- Riverina Murray Destination Management Plan
- NSW Visitor Economy Strategy 2030

Strategic plans that will support deliverables in this pillar:

- Recreation, Open Space and Community Strategy and Implementation Plan 2040

Destination Identity and Marketing

Establish a destination identity that tells Wagga Wagga’s unique story that inspires visitation.

Deliver a consistent message across all platforms with the aim of positioning Wagga Wagga as the capital of the Riverina region.



Priority initiatives

Visitor trend research

Invest in market research and visitor data to develop a clear understanding of the visitor profiles of the city which will inform tourism initiatives. Provide this research and data to local tourism businesses to support new product development and marketing initiatives.

Destination brand

In collaboration with community and industry, develop a destination brand for Wagga Wagga focusing on our destination themes with a particular focus on Wiradjuri culture, language, and story telling to position the city as a destination of choice. The brand will lead the development of key tourism infrastructure and marketing initiatives identified in this Plan.

Destination marketing

Investment in destination marketing activities will be required to meet the goals and objectives of the Plan, to position Wagga Wagga as the capital for the region, encouraging visitors to stay longer and return, and disperse them into the wider region.

Investment in marketing activities takes into consideration the redevelopment of the Visit Wagga Wagga website, digital and physical advertising, and content and production costs, which is underpinned by the proposed marketing plan.

Marketing activities will look at collaborative opportunities for the Wagga Wagga + Surrounds region and leverage off partnerships to develop curated scenic touring routes. These touring routes would connect Wagga Wagga + surrounds beyond the neighbouring network and will have a particular focus on the drive market from the ACT.

STRATEGIC FOCUS 4 DESTINATION IDENTITY AND MARKETING					
Ref.	Initiatives	Timeframe	Stakeholders Lead organisation	Scope	Cost & funding status
DD01	Visitor trend research	Ongoing	Lead: Wagga Wagga City Council	Invest in market research and visitor data to develop a clear understanding of the visitor profiles of the city which will inform tourism initiatives. Provide this research and data to local tourism businesses to support new product development and marketing initiatives.	Year 1 (2025/26) \$20,000 WWCC operational budget, existing/in-kind. Year 2 -10 (2026/27-2035/36) \$20,000 ongoing, unfunded (sources: Council GPR)
DD02	Develop the destination brand	1 – 5 years	Lead: Wagga Wagga City Council Support: Industry and community	In collaboration with community and industry, develop a destination brand for Wagga Wagga focusing on our destination themes with a particular focus on Wiradjuri culture, language, and story telling to position the city as a destination of choice. The brand will lead the development of key tourism infrastructure and marketing initiatives identified in this Plan.	Year 1 (2025/26) WWCC operational budget, exsiting/ in-kind Project to be scoped and costed
DD03	Marketing plan	1 – 5 years	Lead: Wagga Wagga City Council	Develop a marketing plan which will outline a schedule of seasonal marketing initiatives and campaigns. This plan will increase awareness among key visitor markets of the exceptional products and experiences unique to Wagga Wagga.	WWCC operational budget, existing/ in-kind
DD04	Delivering destination marketing	1 – 10 years	Lead: Wagga Wagga City Council Support: Neighbouring Council partners, Destination Riverina Murrumbidgee, Destination NSW, Canberra Region Joint Organisation.	Investment in destination marketing activities will be required to meet the goals and objectives of the Plan, to position Wagga Wagga as the capital for the region encouraging visitors to stay longer and return, and disperse them into the wider region. Investment in marketing activities takes into consideration the redevelopment of the Visit Wagga Wagga website, digital and physical advertising, and content and production costs, which is underpinned by the proposed marketing plan. Marketing activities will look at collaborative opportunities and leverage off partnerships to develop curated scenic touring routes. These touring routes would connect Wagga Wagga + Surrounds beyond the neighbouring network and will have a particular focus on the drive market from the ACT.	Project to be scoped and costed Unfunded (sources: Council GPR and external grants)

- Strategic Links:
- Wagga Wagga Community Strategic Plan
 - Wagga Wagga CBD Masterplan





Appendices

The appendices provide further background context, economic data, and research findings that also contributed to the analysis and development of this Plan.



Strategic policy links

& development context

Strategic positioning

Visitor Economy Governance

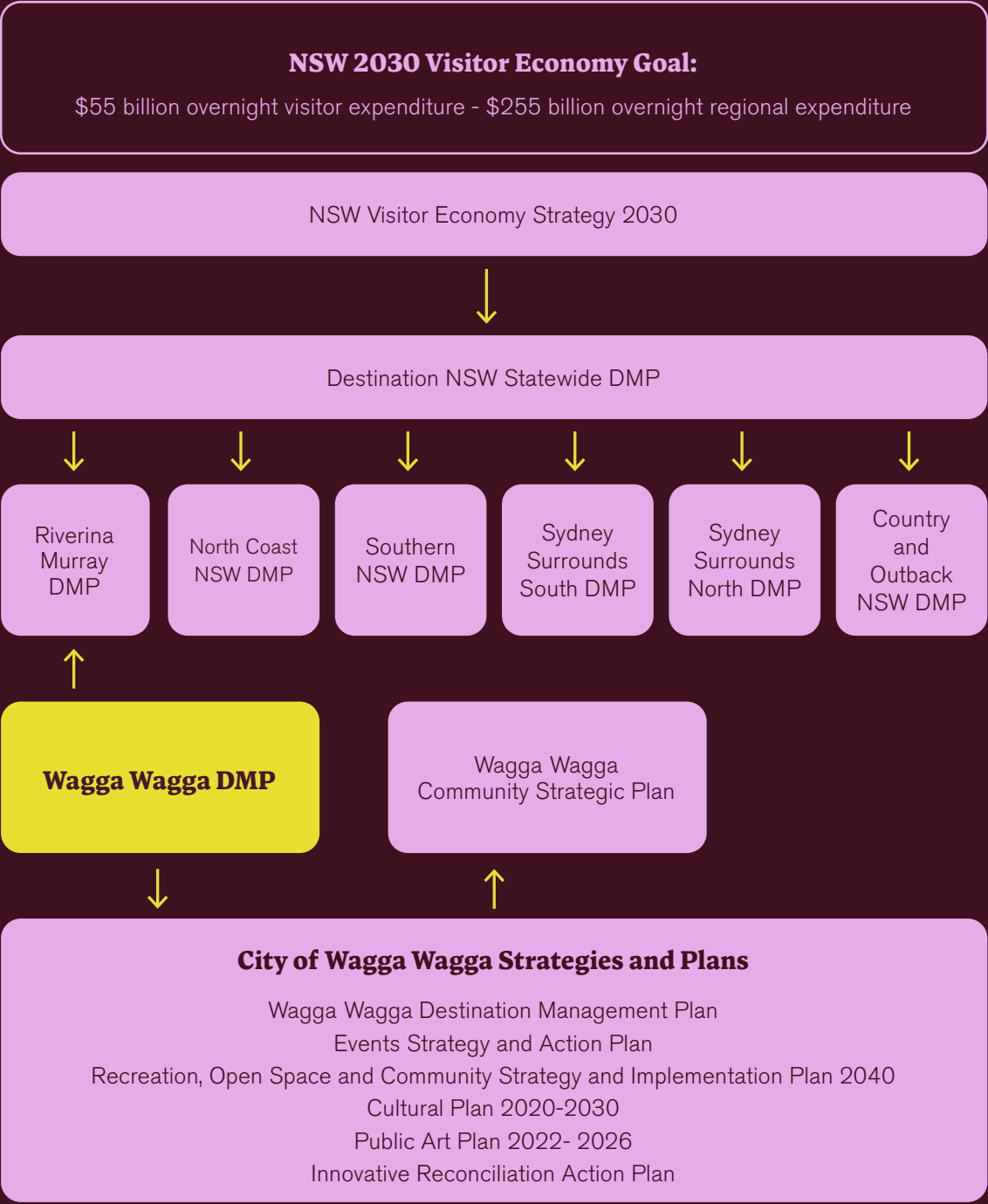
Destinations are often governed by a variety of bodies that range from local to federal levels. The governance structure for the visitor economy in the Wagga Wagga LGA is outlined in Figure 6.

Local government plays a crucial role in supporting the visitor economy, particularly in terms of working closely with industry to support product and experience development, industry growth, and destination marketing.

At the regional level, key organisations host similar aims to those prioritised by local government. However, to develop a strong and sustainable destination, collaboration must be strengthened between the local and regional bodies to work towards a vision and shared goals for the destination.



Figure 6



The following federal, state and regional policies and strategies were analysed to ensure their objectives aligned with the development of the Plan.

Federal

- Thrive 2030 Strategy
- Australian Regional Tourism (ART) Best Practice Destination Management Guide

State

- NSW Visitor Economy Strategy 2030
- Wagga Wagga Special Activation Precinct Plan

Regional

- Riverina Murray Destination Management Plan
- Riverina Murray Regional Plan 2041
- Riverina Murray Agritourism Development Strategy 2024-2033
- A 20-Year Economic Vision for Regional NSW Eastern Riverina Regional Economic Development Strategy

NSW Visitor Economy Strategy 2030

The NSW Visitor Economy Strategy 2030 is the key strategy guiding visitor economy development across NSW.

The strategy outlines five strategic pillars, each with key areas of focus, set to achieve the NSW Government's vision to ensure the state becomes the premier visitor destination in the Asia Pacific by 2030.

These five strategic pillars include:

- 1. Road to recovery
- 2. Build the brand
- 3. Showcase our strengths
- 4. Invest in world-class events
- 5. Facilitate growth

Strategic pillar three 'Showcase our strengths' aligns most to the product in Wagga Wagga. Figure 7 outlines the number of directions from pillar three that are already prominent within the destination.

Directions from strategic pillar four: 'World-class Events' and strategic pillar five: 'Facilitate Growth' were considered in the development of the Plan.

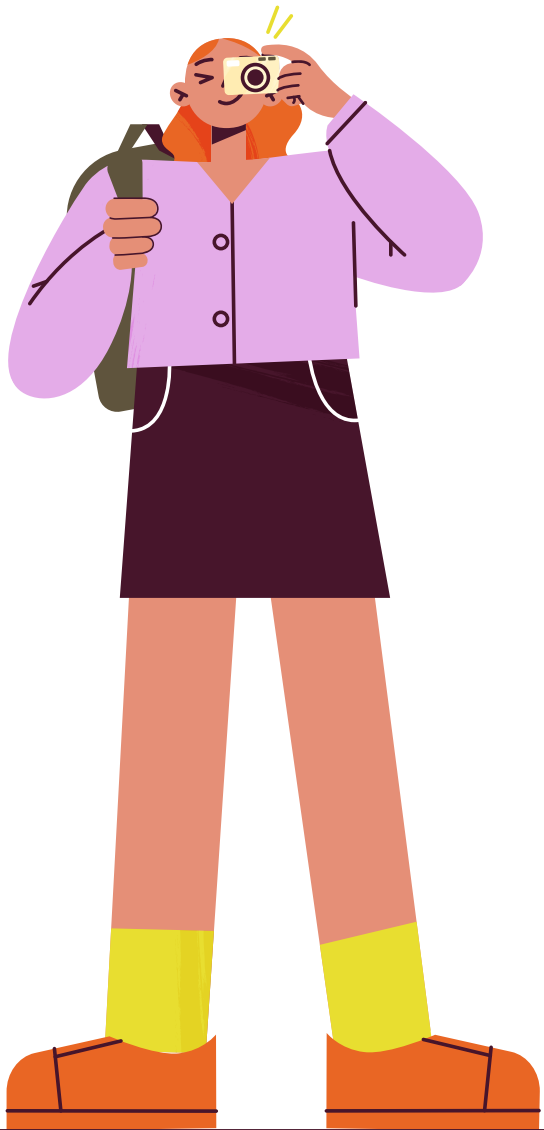


Figure 7

Strategic pillar three 'Showcase our strengths' aligns most to the product in Wagga Wagga:



Icons and hidden gems

- Vibrant retail precincts



Small-town charm

- Small towns with soul
- Beach and the hinterland
- Events with personality
- Self-drive tourism (road trips)
- History and heritage
- Local, handmade and artisanal



Vibrant contemporary culture

- Living Aboriginal culture
- Significant cultural infrastructure
- Art, music, screen, and live performance
- LGBTQIA+ culture and events



Reconnect in nature

- National Parks
- Walking, cycling, rail and mountain bike trails



World class food and drink

- From the producers (paddock to plate and agritourism)
- Winery, brewery, distillery experiences

Regional city comparison

Riverina and New South Wales benchmarking

Using Tourism Research Australia’s (TRA) data sets only for this comparison, Wagga Wagga performs strongly capturing more than half of the entire Riverina visitation in the LGA, based on average visitation over a 5 year period (2018-2022).

Annual visitation	
Destination	5 year average (2018-2022)
Wagga Wagga	1,335,583
Riverina	2,481,543
Regional NSW	62,176,970

Visitor spend is also positive capturing more than half the spend for the Riverina region. This is most likely due to the fact that Wagga Wagga is the largest city in the Riverina and may be seen as location to base yourself as a visitor.

Visitor Expenditure	
Destination	5 year average (2018-2022)
Wagga Wagga	\$375M
Riverina	\$713M
Regional NSW	\$15B

According to Tourism Research Australia during the period 2016 – 2019 the spend for domestic day trip visitors exceeded that of the Riverina and Regional NSW.

The overnight spend was more that the Riverina region yet less that Regional NSW. International spend is competitive exceeding the Regional NSW spend yet below that of the Riverina.

Explanations for the overnight differences would be likely to be based on accommodation offering, standard and style, highlighting the importance of having a diverse selection of product to extract the highest yield from visitors.

Average length of stay for visitors to Wagga Wagga is 2.89 nights compared to 2.63 for the Riverina and slightly less than Regional NSW at 3.38 nights.



The leading purpose of visit is visiting friends and family for Wagga Wagga is 44% compared to 37% in the Riverina and 39% in Regional NSW.

Destination	Type of traveller	4 year average (2016-19)
Wagga Wagga	Domestic day	\$182
	Domestic overnight	\$414
	International	\$998
Riverina	Domestic day	\$153
	Domestic overnight	\$372
	International	\$1,124
Regional NSW	Domestic day	\$114
	Domestic overnight	\$487
	International	\$965

The leading purpose of a visit to Wagga Wagga is visiting friends and family at 44% compared to 37% in the Riverina and 39% in Regional NSW. This aligns with the large number of sporting and community events including the Defence Force Kapooka March Out weekends. Wagga Wagga performs at the lowest when it comes to holiday as the purpose of visit attracting only 33%, compared to 49% in Regional NSW.

There is an opportunity to change this and shift the sentiment to think of Wagga Wagga as a visitor destination. Delivering the actions in the Plan will work towards changing this perception.

Destination comparisons

When comparing Wagga Wagga’s visitation over the last five years (2018-2022) to destinations that have similar population bases in a regional setting, the city outperforms its competition.

Wagga Wagga is attracting more visitors than Albury, Tamworth, Orange and Mildura.

The forecasted population figures for Wagga Wagga estimates the city will grow to 77,540 residents by 2036. When comparing the city to regional destinations with similar population trajectories, highlighted in figure 8, the city’s current visitation compared to the other destinations is considerably low.



Figure 8

Visitation (Similar destination population base)	
Destination	5 year average (2018-22)
Wagga Wagga	1,335,583
Albury	1,120,803
Tamworth	907,208
Orange	1,094,555
Dubbo	1,076,405
Mildura	542, 681

Visitation (Population base of 100,000+)	
Destination	5 year average (2018-22)
Wagga Wagga	1,335,583
Ballarat	2,350,285
Greater Bendigo	2,312,801
Toowoomba	2,481,414



Visitor economy output refers to the total economic value generated by tourism-related activities within a particular region or economy over a specific period. When comparing Wagga Wagga’s visitor economy output to destinations of a similar size, the city is performing better than Tamworth but worse than Dubbo and Mildura, which had less annual visitation numbers than Wagga Wagga over the same period.

Wagga Wagga’s visitor economy is currently outperformed by larger destinations that are expected to have a similar population base by 2036.

This comparison highlights the importance of investment in the tourism industry in the immediate future, to increase visitor yield for continued growth in the future.

Yield at the leading destinations of Ballarat, Greater Bendigo and Toowoomba can be linked to significant visitor attractions and accessibility.

Ballarat

- Sovereign Hill (2021-2022)
- 298,884 annual visitors
 - 87,058 education experiences delivered
 - Two new events attracting 116,638 new visitors

Greater Bendigo

- Redeveloped Bendigo Art Gallery (2014)
- \$10 million construction cost
 - Per annum uplift in arts visitors to Bendigo since establishment adding:
 - + 16,000 daytrip visitors
 - + 22,600 overnight visitors

Toowoomba

- First Coat International Street Art Festival
- 80 Murals throughout the city
 - +3,000 visitors per day
- Toowoomba Region Sports Precinct
- Investment under construction estimated at \$197 million

Visitor Economy Output
(Similar destination population base)

Destination	5 year average (2018-22)
Wagga Wagga	\$158.43 million
Tamworth	\$125.19 million
Dubbo	\$274.7 million
Mildura	\$296.5 million

Visitor Economy Output
Population base of 100,000+

Destination	5 year average (2018-22)
Ballarat	\$221.25 million
Greater Bendigo	\$494.54 million
Toowoomba	\$271.72 million

Visitors by type

Wagga Wagga’s primary purpose of visit, ‘visiting friends and relatives’ (44%), records a higher percentage when compared with similar destination that have about a quarter of their visitation attributed to visiting friends and relatives.

This poses an opportunity to leverage this market and target repeat visitation, by potentially linking it to events or seasonal activities. There is also an opportunity to educate locals on what to see and do with visiting friends and relatives to increase the value of this audience as they are often not paying for accommodation so contribute less to the economy.

Wagga Wagga performs at the same level as other destinations for ‘holiday’ as the purpose of visit with 33%. Any change in this figure will depend on attractions and experiences that are developed as the destination grows and the marketing and promotion of the region as a holiday destination.

‘Other’ reasons for visitation are significantly lower in Wagga Wagga at 7% when compared to similar destinations. This may be due the pull from neighbouring destinations and proximity to Wagga Wagga’s diverse offer of social services such health services, employment providers, education and other medical services.



It is important to consider the future how non-tourism related infrastructure in Wagga Wagga may impact the visitor economy such as hospitals, universities, training facilities and wellbeing services.



Similar destination population base

	Wagga Wagga	Albury	Tamworth	Orange	Dubbo	Mildura
Holiday	33%	35%	35%	34%	37%	41%
Visiting friends and relatives	44%	25%	26%	25%	21%	25%
Business	16%	15%	17%	18%	18%	22%
Other	7%	22%	20%	23%	321%	9%

Population base of 100,000+

	Wagga Wagga	Ballarat	Greater Bendigo	Towoomba
Holiday	33%	35%	35%	34%
Visiting friends and relatives	44%	25%	26%	25%
Business	16%	15%	17%	18%
Other	7%	22%	20%	23%

Consultation findings

Outcomes sought from this Plan

The business and community survey sought to understand local aspirations for the visitor economy and key outcomes desired from the delivery of the Plan.

The 170 responses collected have been depicted in the graphics that follow.

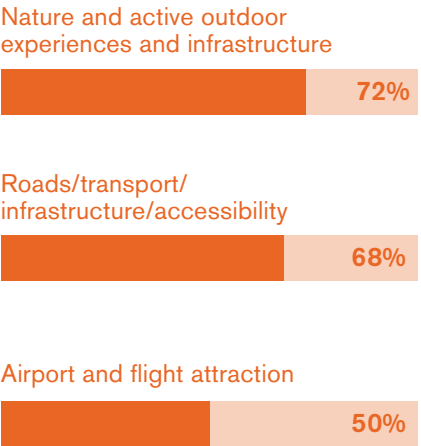
The survey shows that businesses and the community identified the key priorities for the Plan to be the development of new attractions, experiences, nature and active outdoor experiences, and infrastructure investment and region-wide marketing support for businesses.

TOP KEY PRIORITIES

Top 3 outcomes sought from the Plan



Top 3 investment priorities



Top 3 areas of support most needed for



Focus group responses

In consultation for developing the Plan, several focus groups were held to understand the experiences of past visitors and the needs of future visitors and youth residents. The following graphics outline the key responses from each group.

Although Wagga Wagga has strengths in food, wine and ferments, past visitors highlighted nature and CBD experiences as their favourite memory from their visit.

Future visitors were not aware of the high-quality food and drink offering in Wagga Wagga. In addition, focus group participants noted that WWCC needs an iconic attraction to entice visitors.

It is crucial that the Plan outlines actions that showcase Wagga Wagga's strengths to target key markets to change their perception of the destination.

PAST VISITORS

Tell us about your favourite memory of visiting Wagga Wagga

- “Wagga beach”
- “City atmosphere”
- “History”
- “Retail offering”

FUTURE VISITORS

What comes to mind when you think of Wagga Wagga as a holiday destination?

- “City that acts as a regional centre, similar to Shepparton, Victoria”
- “Rural, farm-oriented destination”
- “Lack of high-quality food options”
- “Stopover location”

What will make you travel to Wagga Wagga?

- “High-quality food and accommodation experiences”
- “A novelty or unique festival”
- “An iconic attraction”

YOUTH RESIDENTS

What is Wagga Wagga missing?

- “One unique attraction”
- “Headliner artists and performers”
- “Lookout/tree top walk”
- “Tours and equipment hire”

Are there examples in Australia or internationally for Wagga Wagga to aspire to?

- “Bright - cycling”
- “Central Australia - First Nations product”
- “Southeast Asia - cultural traditions”
- “Japan - variety of activities”

Locations to be improved

Businesses and community members were also encouraged to submit comments about locations that should be improved in Wagga Wagga on a digital map.

The following locations shown on the map were the areas most mentioned that should be focused on for improvement in the Plan.

For the range of locations, they noted in Wagga Wagga, respondents mentioned water activation, public art installation and infrastructure improvements as the top three priorities.



LOCATION PRIORITIES



Water activation



Public art



Infrastructure improvements



Our unique selling point

Drawing on research undertaken to develop this Plan, the unique selling proposition for Wagga Wagga is the dynamic food scene and agritourism offerings supported heavily by history, art, and culture.

Central to this narrative is the region's abundant water resources, nurturing the growth of premium produce for which Wagga Wagga is renowned, yet its potential as a compelling visitor attraction remains largely untapped.

A theme that was evident through the consultation and research was the connection to country, and a strong desire to honour and respectfully share the Indigenous heritage of the region. This presents a significant avenue for growth as there is demand, both domestically and internationally, for authentic First Nations experiences.

Shaping Wagga Wagga as a leading destination

Based on findings and recommendations stated in this Destination Management Plan, the outlook is positive for a strong and successful visitor economy in Wagga Wagga over the next ten years. Building on existing products strengths and enhancing the region's hero experiences will raise the profile of the destination and drive visitation and yield. Continuing to build an engaged tourism industry, investing in infrastructure that supports the visitor economy, and key events that drive visitation will be crucial to the success of achieving the agreed vision that...

Wagga Wagga is a leading regional destination, celebrated for its connection to country and vibrant expression of modern Australian character.





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