

# 1 Accommodation analysis – Gregadoo BESS

## 1.1 Introduction and objective

### **Objective:**

Gather primary data to identify available accommodation and any cumulative impacts for the region.

### **SEARs requirement:**

Social Impact Assessment: Including an assessment of the likely impacts on the local community and a consideration of the construction workforce accommodation.

## 1.2 Methodology

A desktop review was undertaken of real estate agents and accommodation providers near Wagga Wagga to compile a contact list for this assessment.

Using a prepared script, a phone call was made to the listed real estate agents and accommodation providers asking them to comment on their experiences of housing supply and demand. Permission was sought and obtained to transcribe their responses.

We also reached out to major infrastructure projects being undertaken in and around Wagga Wagga including HumeLink, EnergyConnect and the Riverina Redevelopment project via email and phone.

We met with Wagga Wagga City Council on 18 September via video.

Together with publicly available data on AirBnB, realestate.com, and Domain, these responses have been synthesised and assessed for this report.

## 1.3 Target stakeholders

### **Real Estate Agencies**

- Fitzpatricks Real Estate
- PRD Real Estate Wagga Wagga
- Ray White Wagga Wagga
- Macarthur Real Estate Agency
- Raine and Horne Wagga Wagga
- Professionals Real Estate Wagga Wagga
- John Mooney Real Estate

### **Additional Accommodation Providers**

- Quality Hotel Rules Club Wagga
- The Charles
- Centrepoint Motel and Apartments

- Quest Wagga Wagga
- Globe Apartments
- Carlyle Suites and Apartments
- Civic Apartments Wagga
- Apartments by Townhouse
- Proline Serviced Apartments
- Brae View Apartments

#### Major Projects

- Energy Connect – Transgrid
- HumeLink - Transgrid
- Riverina Redevelopment Joint Venture on behalf of the Department of Defence

#### Local Government

- Wagga Wagga City council

#### Response

- Responses Received: 8 detailed responses (5 via phone, 3 via email)
- Email from EnergyConnect
- No response from Riverina Redevelopment Project via two channels
- Meeting with Wagga Wagga City Council

## 1.4 What was said – respondents

Table 1-1 contains a summary of the primary data collected for the accommodation study.

Table 1-1: Accommodation providers primary data

Accommodation Provider	Key Points	Details/Comments
<b>Real estate agents</b>		
<b>Fitzpatrick's Real Estate</b>	<b>Availability – Low</b>	Wagga has the lowest vacancy rates in New South Wales with vacancy rates below 1%. Demand significantly outweighs supply. Other local towns (Narrandera and Junee) have no excess supply.
	<b>Market trends – investors leaving and legislation changes</b>	<p>Investors are leaving the market because of huge capital growth contributing to the shortage in supply.</p> <p>Legislation changes (beginning on May 19) limit tenant eviction requiring a reason to end a lease. This has led to reluctance for head-leases for worker housing.</p> <p>Private leases are preferred over leasing to companies (particularly large ones with 150 employees) as companies are seen as higher risk.</p>

Accommodation Provider	Key Points	Details/Comments
	<b>Lease lengths</b> – Shift from 12-month to 6-months	There is a shift from 12-month to 6-month leases. This is a result of the legislation changes which now require longer notice periods from landlords if they want to end the lease (60 days for 6 month, 90 days for 12-month).
<b>Macarthur Real Estate</b>	<b>Availability</b> – low	Exceptionally tight rental market with vacancy rates at just 0.5% as of June 2025, well below the Real Estate Institute of Australia’s healthy benchmark of 3.0%.
	<b>Single household workforce will lead to increased competition</b>	Competition for 1-bedroom and 2-bedroom dwellings will intensify. These smaller units turn over fastest and typically lease within days. Without corporate leasing or serviced-apartment arrangements, securing adequate long-stay accommodation in this segment will be challenging.
	<b>Nearby towns</b> – greater availability	<p>Narrandera has a vacancy around 0.65%, with roughly 19 properties available in a market of over 5000 rentals.</p> <p>Junee has a vacancy about 0.77% in a pool of over 6000 rental properties.</p> <p>Both towns offer marginally greater availability but still reflect a tight regional market. They can serve as overflow locations.</p>
	<b>Typical lease length</b> – 12 months	Standard lease terms here are 12 months, with occasional 6-month agreements. Shorter leases (3–6 months) exist but are limited and generally command a premium. We often include break-clause options to align with project timelines.
	<b>Community &amp; Market Response</b>	Accommodating an additional 150 workers could push local rents up by an estimated 5–10% and further reduce vacancy. Landlords may pivot toward corporate leases or short-term arrangements. Meanwhile, long-term tenants often seek lease renewals to lock in current rates, so competition at the tail end of existing tenancies will be strong.
<b>Raine and Horne Wagga Wagga</b>	<b>Availability</b> – mixed, slow down in the middle of the year.	There is steady availability with slight seasonal slow-down in the middle of the year. The local market would respond well to additional demand. Single households would not have a significant impact on availability.
	<b>Lease lengths</b> – 6 months	Lease terms typically start with 6 months, with extensions available.

Accommodation Provider	Key Points	Details/Comments
<b>PRD real estate Wagga Wagga</b>	<b>Availability</b> – Low, potential new developments dependent on timing	<p>There is low availability with the vacancy rates below 1%. Rent prices are competitive in the area. There are several proposed or approved developments including Tolland Estate offering about 500 new homes. These may increase supply but may not be completed in time for the project.</p> <p>There are currently listings available but they are highly competitive and the market is dynamic with the listings going quickly.</p> <p>There is low availability in nearby towns Narrandera and Junee.</p>
<b>Professionals Real Estate Wagga Wagga</b>	<b>Availability</b> – low	<p>Supply is very low with vacancy at less than 0.6%. There is a very active market where both sales and rentals are high. The market is already tight, more demand would intensify competition and further reduce availability.</p> <p>Companies usually have a better chance of securing the lease than individuals.</p>
	<b>Lease length</b> – 12 months	12 months leases are standard.
<b>Accommodation providers</b>		
<b>Quest Wagga Wagga</b>	<b>Availability</b> – low with potential increase due to projects ending and new builds	<p>There are currently around 200 Humelink project contractors staying in Wagga however the project is due to finish in September 2025. Two new hotels are being built in Wagga and along with other projects finishing, it is likely there will be an oversupply of availability in the area. Quest are supportive of future projects to maintain occupancy.</p>
	<b>Managing demand</b> – coordination across providers	<p>Accommodation providers coordinate across hotels to support availability. Quest will ring around different hotels to book and manage supply if needed. Sometimes they have 20 people stay with them and then put 30-35 people in different hotels. Regional towns tend to have smaller hotels with only 20-30 beds.</p>
<b>Civic Apartments Wagga</b>	<b>Availability</b> – low	<p>High market demand with constant 80-90% occupancy with only 6 apartments. Wagga could always do with more housing. Civic are looking at acquiring more apartments to grow business and service demand.</p> <p>There is talk of other hotels being built in Wagga but they are room-based, not serviced apartments, so serve a different market to Civic.</p>

Accommodation Provider	Key Points	Details/Comments
	<b>Demand trends</b> – very low availability during major events	Wagga is booked out during major events (State touch carnival in February some people had to book over an hour away). September is also a peak time.
	<b>Targeting long term stays</b>	They are a small boutique apartment and want to target long-term stays. They are trying to get demand from the big military infrastructure project nearby. Often business and corporate people stay the longest.
<b>Apartments by Townhouse</b>	<b>Availability</b> – low	85% booked full over the last year. They usually have 10 rooms booked per week.  Accommodating an extra 150 people would put pressure on traveling professionals who are often quite regular clients who usually stay Monday to Thursday.  Some local towns usually have slightly more availability like Narrandera or Junee. Wagga usually has low availability.
	<b>Annual trends</b> – corporate and worker accommodation	They get a lot of corporate and government workers including from Inland Rail and have mostly business people staying rather than families.

Table 1-2: Major projects primary data

Major project	Key Points	Details/comments
EnergyConnect - Transgrid	Estimated completion of project 2026 reducing demand on services in the area, including accommodation.	When capacity of local camps is exceeded, short-term in Wagga is utilised. However, as the project draws to a close this will continue to decrease.
Humelink – Transgrid	Worker accommodation located at Tarcutta scheduled for opening September 2025.	The workers camp has a capacity of 350 beds, and is located on Mates Gully Road.
Riverina Redevelopment – Department of Defence	N/A	No response was received to emails

## 1.5 Analysis

This section of the report provides an analysis of data collected for the accommodation study.

Our investigation for the Social Impact Assessment (SIA) and cumulative impacts indicates that while Wagga Wagga is experiencing housing pressures, the relatively low number of additional construction workers for Gregadoo BESS of up to 50 during the peak construction period is unlikely to significantly exacerbate the existing housing pressures. However, we acknowledge the concerns raised by council and their request that any non-local staff be housed in dedicated accommodation. Real estate feedback indicates low vacancy rates, with four different agencies indicating the vacancy rate is 1% or less. One real estate agent noted Wagga Wagga has the

lowest rental vacancy in New South Wales. This is consistent with data from the Real Estate Institute of NSW (REINSW), which reports the Riverina (incorporating Wagga Wagga), had a 0.7% residential vacancy rate in June 2025<sup>1</sup>, the lowest among all the regions surveyed. Accommodation provider feedback reflected this with most providers noting they have at least 80% occupancy year-round. Accommodation providers noted that existing projects in the area such as HumeLink and Inland Rail are already placing strain on capacity. Despite this, one accommodation provider noted that the demand for housing supply may ease in 2026 due to several infrastructure projects coming to an end and new housing developments in the area. One accommodation provider noted the HumeLink workforce of about 200 workers only require accommodation until September 2025. In addition to this, both a real estate agent and an accommodation provider mentioned the new housing being built in the area with two new hotels and several new or proposed housing developments. While there are significant housing pressures in the Wagga area, given the modification requires a relatively small number of construction workers, even at peak, compared to Wagga Wagga’s total housing demand, this is unlikely to markedly exacerbate current pressure.

Views were mixed on leasing to corporates. One real estate agent preferred corporate clients for their reliability, and several accommodation providers noted they target long-term stays. Alternatively, another agency considered large corporate leases risky and favoured private tenants. Recent NSW tenancy law reforms, including abolishing “no grounds” evictions and extending notice periods, have made landlords wary of head leases for worker housing.

Similarly, there were mixed views about typical lease length, with two real estate agents saying they are typically 6 months in length and two saying the standard lengths are 12 months. One real estate noted the shift to 6-month leases occurred after the tenancy reforms requiring longer notice periods for ending a lease. Another real-estate noted that shorter lease lengths of 3-6 months exist but are limited and generally command a premium.

Providers noted that during local events, accommodation becomes extremely limited, and people are often required to travel and stay in nearby towns. Feedback noted that nearby towns, including Narrandera and Junee, offer marginally greater availability however still reflect a tight market and should not be relied on to offset workforce housing needs.

A review of anecdotal housing data (see Table 1.3) from mid-July 2025 suggests that some suitable short-term accommodations are available in the area, although there is variability based on seasonal demands. One accommodation provider noted that September is a peak period, this aligns with data from REINSW which showed that September 2024 had the lowest vacancy rate in the Riverina region in the past year.<sup>2</sup> The proponent’s intention to hire locally where feasible, would alleviate some of the strain on housing and related services.

*Table 1-3: Short-term accommodation availability as of July 2025*

Accommodation platform	Wagga Wagga
Airbnb properties available	151
realestate.com and Domain.com properties available	253 (properties for rent)

A review of major projects being undertaken in the area highlighted that one project, EnergyConnect, will be concluding in 2026. Anecdotal evidence suggests that major projects<sup>3</sup> may lease a large number of properties during the life of a project (size dependent) across the project footprint. These properties may be used to house senior leadership staff and specialists, as well as overflow when accommodation camps are at capacity. With

<sup>1</sup> Real Estate Institute of NSW. (2025) Vacancy Rate Survey Results. REINSW <https://www.reinsw.com.au/common/Uploaded%20files/media%20release/2025/Jul/REINSW%20Vacancy%20Rate%20Result%20June%202025.pdf>

<sup>2</sup> Real Estate Institute of NSW. (2025) Vacancy Rate Survey Results. REINSW <https://www.reinsw.com.au/common/Uploaded%20files/media%20release/2025/Jul/REINSW%20Vacancy%20Rate%20Result%20June%202025.pdf>

<sup>3</sup> In NSW, a “Major Project” refers to a State Significant Development or State Significant Infrastructure project that is significant to the state for economic, social or environmental reasons. <https://www.planning.nsw.gov.au/assess-and-regulate/development-assessment/planning-approval-pathways/state-significant-development>

EnergyConnect nearing completion, we would expect to see a modest increase in private rental availability over the next 18 months.

HumeLink is estimated to commence in September 2025. It has workers accommodation located at Tarcutta accommodation facility and compound with capacity of 350 beds. Under the HumeLink West Monitoring Framework and Trigger Action Response Plan, 90% or more of the non-local workforce must be housed in approved worker accommodation during main construction works.<sup>4</sup>

The Riverina Redevelopment Joint Venture is responsible for a major defence project of three parts:

- Albury Wodonga Military Area redevelopment
- RAAF Base Wagga Redevelopment
- Blamey Barracks Kapooka Redevelopment

The joint venture was contacted, but no response has been received to date. No information is publicly available about the staging of these projects; however construction commenced in mid-2025 and is expected to be completed in 2033.

While Wagga faces significant housing strain, the anticipated addition of the BESS component brings only a modest increase in construction demand. However, we acknowledge Council's concern about the cumulative impact to the area. This incremental workforce is not expected to substantially exacerbate housing stress. In addition, several providers indicated a potential easing of housing pressure in early 2026 due to several current local projects scheduled to finish. To mitigate ongoing pressure, accommodation for the project workforce should be sourced early and by leveraging a mix of channels to ensure demand can be met. Any contingency options in nearby towns will require early discussions with local providers to match project timing with capacity. Additionally, close monitoring of major events in the local area is needed to manage peak periods and ensure supply during these times.

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<sup>4</sup> Social impact Management Plan, HumeLink West, appendix e – summary monitoring framework and tarps, <https://www.transgrid.com.au/humelink-west/>