



MY TOWN

WAGGA WAGGA

NSW'S LARGEST INLAND CITY IS A GREAT PLACE TO LIVE,
WORK AND CELEBRATE THE OUTDOORS.

WORDS CLAIRE MACTAGGART PHOTOGRAPHY BRIGID ARNOTT



Wagga Wagga's beautiful Anglican Parish.
FACING PAGE Little Triffids Flowers sells
divine bouquets of fresh blooms and
offers seasonal floral workshops.



ON THE BANKS OF THE beautiful Murrumbidgee River in Wiradjuri Country, Wagga Wagga is approximately halfway between Melbourne and Sydney. This thriving Riverina city has a population of some 65,000 people, thanks to a solid economic base including agriculture, defence, education, tourism, health and retail.

Artist Stephanie Day, 51, moved to Wagga in 1989 to study Graphic Design at Charles Sturt University and later opened her own gallery and studio, Paper Pear. "There is still a real sense of community, despite the size and a fresh injection of faces which arrives every year due to the university, army and airforce bases here," she says.

Stephanie enjoys the best of both worlds, living on a farm just a few minutes away from the gallery. "I love a Murrumbidgee River walk and taking in the sunrises and sunsets from home," she says. "I can find all of my favourite things within five minutes of the gallery – the best blooms at Scooter Flowers, my hairdresser – The Hive Hair Studio, lunch from Lucid Coffee Bar or Fitz Cafe, my framer Lilly Lane, shiny bling at St Prin Jewellery, gifts at My Shed Home, a fabulous dress at Confetti Emporium, a ripe wedge of cheese from Knights Deli and obligatory stop for a gin and tonic at Meccanico."

Fellow Wagga business owner Belle Armstrong runs Texas Jane, a clothing boutique which she opened with

Eloise Harris in 2019. Belle lives at nearby Lockhart and travels to Wagga most days. "We have an amazing, tight-knit small business community in the Fitzmaurice Street precinct," Belle, 29, says. "We're really proud to work alongside so many clever creators, makers and business owners. Together we are able to bring something diverse and unique to the Wagga community and beyond."

According to Belle, it's the people of Wagga that make it such a wonderful place to live and work. "We have felt so welcome as newcomers to the community, both in our professional and personal lives. It's a really warm and friendly place," she explains.

Belle's favourite haunts include the Shop Fitzmaurice Precinct for retail therapy, followed by delicious cocktails at Meccanico, and dinner at Thaigga, a modern Thai fusion restaurant, or Pastoral, for fine dining and wine. *For more information, head to: visitwagga.com >*

GETTING THERE Wagga Wagga is just under three hours' drive from Canberra, and about five hours' drive from Sydney or Melbourne.

FLYING IN? QantasLink has flights to and from Sydney, while Regional Express has flights to and from Sydney and Melbourne. waggawaggaairport.com.au

"We have an amazing, tight-knit small business community... Wagga is a really warm and friendly place."

Residents enjoy rural scenery with the convenience of town services just minutes from home. **FACING PAGE, CLOCKWISE, FROM TOP LEFT** Paper Pear owner Stephanie Day with artworks by Kerrie Jeffs, Catherine Stewart and Russ Newman; luxurious suites at The Houston; Meccanico serves up fresh meals with local flavours; riverside strolls offer tranquillity; charming terrace houses in town.



Stephanie Day

ARTIST AND OWNER, PAPER PEAR

"There is still a real sense of community in Wagga Wagga, despite the size."



MEDIAN HOUSE PRICE

\$509,000

MEDIAN RENTAL PRICE

\$ 430 per week

BY THE NUMBERS

"We have a broad market of buyers from \$400,000 to \$2 million, but between \$400,000-\$650,000 is the sweet spot. For first home buyers and investors, you get very good quality for that price," says Ryan Smith of PRD Real Estate.

MARKET WATCH

"Wagga has great schools, the Army and RAAF. We have a relaxed lifestyle, great pubs and sport, and a friendly community," Ryan adds.





COMMUNITY SUPPORT

Wagga has 34 preschools, 23 primary schools and nine high schools. The Wagga community comprises people from 112 nationalities. It has a young population and the largest group is aged between 20 to 29 years. Wagga is a strong and proud First Nations community, with more than one in 20 identifying as Wiradjuri or First Nations. Excellent education and training facilities include three university campuses, TAFE NSW Riverina Institute, RAAF Base Wagga and Kapooka Army Recruit Training Centre. It also has a wide range of cultural, sporting and health facilities. visitwagga.com/visitor-information/download-guides/official-visitor-guide; mycommunitydirectory.com.au/New_South_Wales/Wagga_Wagga For information about living in this great regional city, visit wagga.nsw.gov.au/community



REASONS TO VISIT

PAPER PEAR Drop into this popular gallery and studio to view an array of works by Australian artists and makers. 9 Gurwood Street, 0429 301 631; paperpear.com

BIDGEE STRAWBERRIES AND CREAM Pick your own, join a tour or stock up on ice-cream or sorbet. Billagha Street, 0480 311 643; bidgeestrawberriesandcream.com.au

BORAMBOLA WINES Visit this family-owned enterprise and sample quality chardonnay, shiraz, cider and beer. 1734 Sturt Highway, Borambola, 0404 084 657; borambola.com

LITTLE TRIFFIDS FLOWERS Learn how to grow your own cut flowers or create an arrangement at this micro-flower farm. 30 Fitzmaurice Street, (02) 6900 2181; littletriffids.com.au

REASONS TO STAY

FOOD I AM Take a cooking class with regional and international guest chefs. Junior chef classes are also available. foodiam.com.au

WAGGA BEACH Enjoy a dip in the Murrumbidgee River or picnic on the sandy beach at this scenic spot, which is part of the Wiradjuri Walking Track. Cabarita Beach, Johnson Street.

TRAILS Try the 42-kilometre Wiradjuri Trail that loops around the city or head to Pomingalarna Reserve, 10 minutes from the CBD. Download the Wagga Wagga & Surrounds Trail Map: visitwagga.com/seendo/trails >

CLOCKWISE, FROM BELOW The Murrumbidgee Turf Club; striking Indigenous wares from Little Black Duck; relax with a cocktail at Pastorate; Paper Pear displays art by Madeline Young, Gina Fishman and Johnny K.

FACING PAGE, CLOCKWISE, FROM LEFT Historic Birch House accommodation; florist Sophie Kurylowicz runs Little Triffids Flowers; elegant dining at Pastorate; order an artistic arrangement from Scooter Flowers.





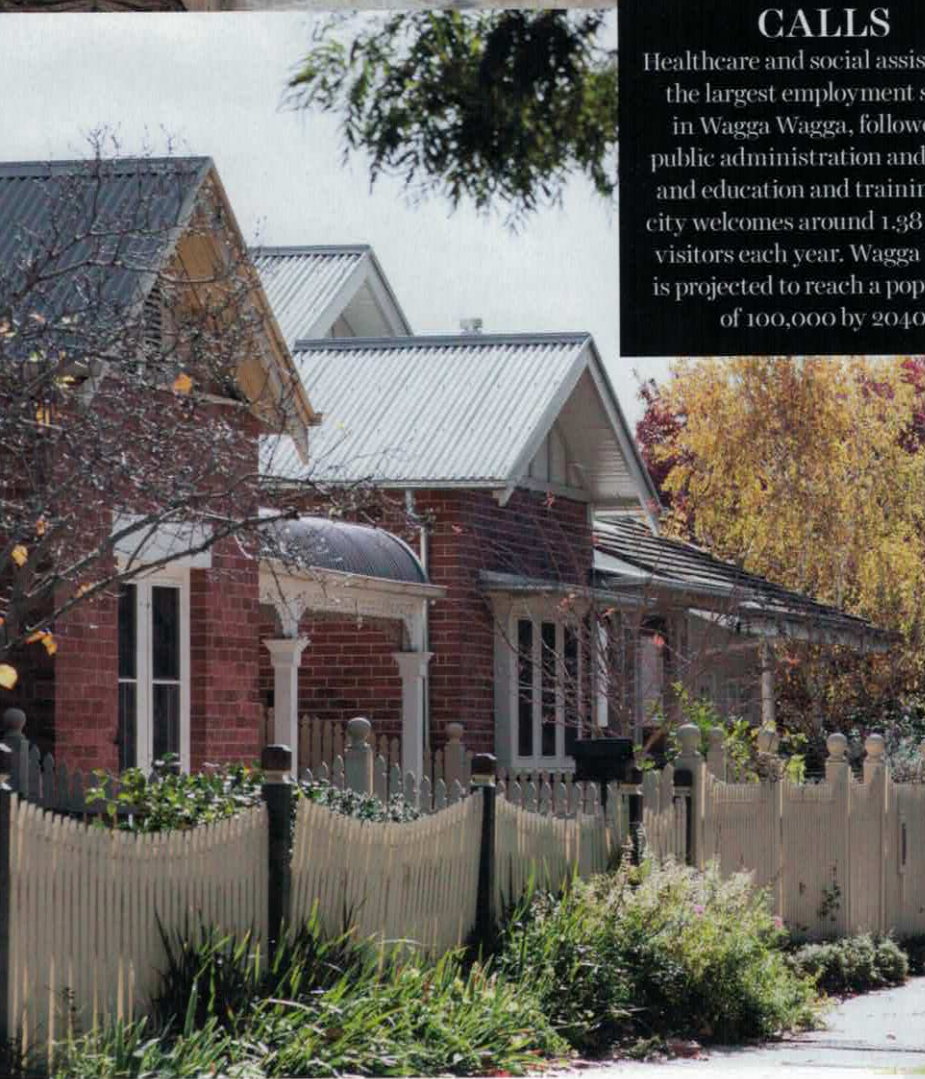
OPPORTUNITY CALLS

Healthcare and social assistance is the largest employment sector in Wagga Wagga, followed by public administration and safety, and education and training. The city welcomes around 1.38 million visitors each year. Wagga Wagga is projected to reach a population of 100,000 by 2040.

Belle Armstrong

CO-FOUNDER, TEXAS JANE

"We have felt so welcome as newcomers to the community both in our professional and personal lives."



Horseracing at Murrumbidgee Turf Club. **FACING PAGE, CLOCKWISE, FROM TOP LEFT** Monty & Moo stocks a wide range of clothing, gifts and homewares, including art by GeorgiaK Paints; Belle Armstrong, co-founder of Texas Jane; head to The Speckled Hen for quality furnishings; quaint homes in town.

SHOP

MONTY & MOO Your first stop for gorgeous homewares, accessories, and Australian-made fashion and gifts. 120b Fitzmaurice Street, 0427 778 636; montyandmoo.com.au

MY SHED HOME Browse furniture, gifts and homewares. 108 Fitzmaurice Street, (02) 6921 3141; @myshedhome

RUBY TUESDAY A heavenly retail space, plus creative workshops. 95 Fitzmaurice Street, 0422 298 686; rubytuesdaywagga.com.au

THE SPECKLED HEN Find beautiful bespoke furniture and homewares. 2/82 Thorne Street, 0499 782 723; thespeckledhenwagga.com

TEXAS JANE You'll discover the perfect piece at this modern boutique

featuring exciting Australian brands. 114 Fitzmaurice Street, 0431 704 688; shoptexasjane.com

EAT

MECCANICO ESPRESSO + WINE For excellent coffee, meals and wine in trendy Cadell Place. 171 Fitzmaurice Street; meccanicowagga.com.au

PASTORALE Enjoy a premium dining experience in a stunning setting. Cnr of Tarcutta and Sturt Streets; pastoralewagga.com.au

MAGPIES NEST Try the braised scotch of pork with seared chorizo and drizzle of lime and miso caramel at this lovely restaurant. Cnr of Old Narrandera and Pine Gully Roads, (02) 6933 1523; magpiesnestwagga.com

CADELL PLACE This all-in-one location offers great coffee, a range of cuisines and must-have shopping. 171 Fitzmaurice Street; cadellplace.com.au

STAY

THE HOUSTON Stay in style at this luxurious self-contained apartment hotel. 44 Kincaid Street, (02) 5908 1321; thehoustonwagga.com.au

BIRCH HOUSE This charming 1920s home in central Wagga sleeps six guests. @birchhouseaccommodation
WAGGA WAGGA COUNTRY COTTAGES Enjoy Riverina farmland views in these cosy cottages. Breakfast included. 85 Hillary Street, (02) 6921 1539; waggawaggacountrycottages.com.au *CS*

"We are really proud to work alongside so many clever creators, makers and business owners."

