strategique

EVIDENCE-BASED MARKET REPORT

STRATEGIQUE INTELLIGENCE BRIEFING · AUSTRALIA

Australian Mortgage Brokers Market Report

A dated comparison of 4 selected mortgage brokers markets, built from stored competitor, demographic, rating, and review evidence.

4	54	54	69
selected suburbs	mapped businesses	ratings sampled	review snippets

Snapshot issued 30 October 2026. Source reports generated from 21 July 2026 to 10 August 2026.

WHY THIS REPORT EXISTS

The evidence trail behind this comparison

Mortgage broking is often described as a digital or phone-based service, and much of the transaction does happen remotely. Customer acquisition is still stubbornly local. Brokers typically build volume through referral relationships with local real estate agents, accountants, builders and past clients, and through word of mouth in the communities where buyers live. A broker's reputation travels through suburb-level networks, and the reviews customers leave are read by neighbours making the same decision. That is why mapped competitor counts and local review themes are a meaningful lens for this category, even though a borrower can technically use a broker anywhere.

Competition in broking is less about price than in many service categories. Broker remuneration is largely lender-paid, so the borrower rarely compares fees the way they would compare quotes from a tradesperson. Choice is instead driven by trust, perceived competence, how clearly the process is explained, and whether the broker follows through at the stressful points of a loan application. The pooled review data in this sample is consistent with that general pattern. Reliability (56 of 69 snippets), service quality (38) and communication (38) dominate, while price and value registers only 9 mentions.

Because the competitive currency is trust rather than price, the structure of a local market matters a great deal. A suburb with many established brokers, like Wollongong with 35, means referral relationships are likely already spoken for and a newcomer competes for attention against operators with review histories. A suburb with very few mapped brokers, like Greenacre with 1, presents a different problem. There is less established competition, but also no local review benchmark showing what customers there value, and possibly brokers servicing the area from outside the mapped boundary.

A suburb-by-suburb comparison is useful because none of these figures means much in isolation. A density score of 49 reads differently once you know the sample average is 50 and the range runs from 6 to 88. An average rating of 3.2 reads differently when the next suburb up sits at 4.1 and the highest at 5.0. The value of this sample is in the contrasts it exposes, and the same method applies to any suburb an operator is weighing.

EXECUTIVE SIGNAL

What the evidence shows

This comparison covers four NSW suburbs: Wollongong, Byron Bay, Pendle Hill and Greenacre. Its headline is that the market with the most visible activity is not the one with the most relative headroom. Wollongong has the largest population in the sample (27,883) and by far the most mapped mortgage brokers (35), yet it posts the lowest Strategique Score at 31, 18 points behind the sample leader.

Pendle Hill leads on Strategique Score at 49, only 1 point ahead of Byron Bay (48) and 2 ahead of Greenacre (47). With a spread that tight among those three suburbs, the score separates Wollongong from the rest more clearly than it ranks the top three against each other.

Competitive density is where the sample diverges most. Wollongong sits at 88/100 against a sample average of 50, while Greenacre sits at 6/100 with a single mapped competitor and no rated listings. Byron Bay (57) and Pendle Hill (49) sit close to the average. The two near-average suburbs differ sharply on customer ratings: Byron Bay's mapped competitors average 5.0/5, while Pendle Hill's average 3.2/5, the lowest among suburbs with rated listings.

Across 69 pooled review snippets, reliability is mentioned 56 times, well ahead of every other theme. Price and value is mentioned just 9 times. Reliability mentions are flat month-on-month in each of the three suburbs with review data.

The suburbs are illustrative evidence of how a location comparison works, not a shortlist. Read every figure here relative to the others in the sample, not as a verdict on any single market.

THE COMPETITIVE LANDSCAPE

How the evidence interacts across this sample

Start with the interaction between score and density, because it is the clearest pattern in the sample. Wollongong combines the highest density (88/100), the most competitors (35) and the largest population (27,883) with the lowest Strategique Score (31). The other three suburbs all have density at or below 57 and scores between 47 and 49. As a simple calculation from the data, Wollongong has roughly one mapped broker per 800 residents, against roughly one per 1,200 in Byron Bay and one per 1,550 in Pendle Hill. Possible interpretation: Wollongong's scale is real, but it is already heavily contested, and its 'Regional demand leader' tag describes activity rather than room. The counts alone do not show whether another operator could be absorbed, and they offer no protection from incumbents competing hard on service or referral terms.

The sample illustrates four distinct archetypes. Wollongong is the saturated scale market: high demand signals, high density, and a 4.1/5 average rating that sits second in the sample. Entry there rewards a sharp point of difference, such as a specialised borrower segment or an established referral pipeline brought in from elsewhere, rather than a generalist offer. Byron Bay is the high-bar market. Density is moderately above average at 57, but its 9 mapped competitors average a perfect 5.0/5 and its opportunity score (62) is the highest in the sample. Possible interpretation: customers there appear well served on the measures they review, so a new entrant would be measured against an unusually high benchmark from day one.

Pendle Hill is the service-gap market, and it is the most analytically interesting of the four. Its Strategique Score (49) leads the sample. Its density (49) sits almost exactly on the sample average. It records the highest median household income in the sample at $2,057/week (ABS Census 2021), ahead of Byron Bay at $1,748/week. Yet its 9 mapped competitors average just 3.2/5, nearly a full point below Wollongong and 1.8 points below Byron Bay. Hypothesis to test: Pendle Hill's incumbents may be under-delivering on the reliability and communication themes customers prioritise, which would make service execution, rather than presence alone, the lever. The income figure is context only. It does not establish loan sizes, borrower quality or a willingness to pay.

Greenacre is the thin-evidence market. Its density of 6/100 is the lowest in the sample by a wide margin, against an average of 50. It has one mapped competitor and zero review snippets, so its blank rating reflects the absence of rated listings, not poor performance. Its score (47) sits within 2 points of the leader, and its median household income of $1,429/week (ABS Census 2021) is third of four. The low density looks like openness, but an operator should treat it with caution. A single mapped broker does not mean local borrowers are unserved, because brokers from neighbouring suburbs, bank lenders and mobile brokers may already cover the area without appearing in a local map. Low visible competition is a hypothesis to test with referral-partner conversations, not a finding.

The review-theme data shows what customers are judging operators on. Reliability appears in 56 of 69 snippets, roughly four in five. Service quality and communication each appear in 38, a little over half. Responsiveness appears in 16 and price and value in 9. The trend signals show reliability mentions holding flat month-on-month at around 20 in Wollongong, 16 in Byron Bay and 20 in Pendle Hill, each consistent with its trailing two-month average. Possible interpretation: customer expectations in this category are stable rather than shifting, and they centre on dependability through the loan process. The flat trend means no suburb shows a sudden change in what customers care about. The differentiator is therefore execution against a known expectation, not anticipating a new one.

Put together, the competitive question in this sample is less about where brokers are and more about how well they deliver on reliability. Byron Bay's 5.0 average suggests incumbents there are meeting the bar. Pendle Hill's 3.2 average, set against review themes dominated by reliability and communication, is the most visible mismatch between what customers mention and how they rate local operators. The linked per-suburb opportunity reports, and where available their SWOT and Porter's Five Forces breakdowns, quantify these dynamics further for each market.

01 / EVIDENCE TABLE

Selected suburb comparison

Each card mirrors the interactive report's evidence table. Open the linked market opportunity report for the full local breakdown.

Wollongong, NSW

REGIONAL DEMAND LEADER

31
Strategique Score / 100

Density 88/100 · 35 mapped competitors · 4.1/5 avg rating (35) · 25 review snippets
Population 27,883 · Median household income $991/wk · Data updated 21 July 2026

Byron Bay, NSW

48
Strategique Score / 100

Density 57/100 · 9 mapped competitors · 5.0/5 avg rating (9) · 20 review snippets
Population 10,914 · Median household income $1,748/wk · Data updated 10 August 2026

Pendle Hill, NSW

49
Strategique Score / 100

Density 49/100 · 9 mapped competitors · 3.2/5 avg rating (9) · 24 review snippets
Population 13,939 · Median household income $2,057/wk · Data updated 10 August 2026

Greenacre, NSW

47
Strategique Score / 100

Density 6/100 · 1 mapped competitors · 0.0/5 avg rating (1) · 0 review snippets
Population 14,637 · Median household income $1,429/wk · Data updated 10 August 2026

02 / CUSTOMER EVIDENCE

What appears in available review snippets

Transparent mention counts from the stored snippets, not sentiment scores or a survey of all customers.

Reliability 56 mentions

Service quality 38 mentions

Communication 38 mentions

Responsiveness 16 mentions

Price and value 9 mentions

TREND SIGNALS MONTH OVER MONTH

- "Reliability" mentions in Wollongong have held steady at around 20 this month, consistent with the trailing 2-month average.
- "Reliability" mentions in Byron Bay have held steady at around 16 this month, consistent with the trailing 2-month average.
- "Reliability" mentions in Pendle Hill have held steady at around 20 this month, consistent with the trailing 2-month average.

03 / OPPORTUNITY SIGNALS

Location signals worth investigating

RELATIVE MARKET HEADROOM

Pendle Hill

Pendle Hill leads this comparison with a Strategique Score™ of 49, 1 points ahead of Byron Bay (48). Treat this as a starting point for a location-specific score, not a demand forecast.

LOWER MAPPED COMPETITIVE DENSITY

Greenacre

Greenacre has the lowest competitive density in this comparison at 6/100, against a sample average of 50 and Pendle Hill's 49/100, based on the businesses mapped for each market.

HIGHER HOUSEHOLD-INCOME CONTEXT

Pendle Hill

Pendle Hill records the highest median household income in this comparison at $2,057/week, ahead of Byron Bay at $1,748/week. This is context only; it does not establish spend, foot traffic, or product fit.

STRONGEST CUSTOMER-RATING SIGNAL

Byron Bay

Byron Bay carries the highest average competitor rating in this comparison at 5.0/5 across 9 rated listings, ahead of Wollongong at 4.1/5. High ratings can reflect either a well-served market or a high bar new entrants would need to clear -- read it alongside density, not on its own.

WHO SHOWS UP IN THESE MARKETS

Family and household regulars, on average across this sample

The persona these markets point to is labelled 'Family and household regulars'. The ABS persona statistics describe a median age of 36, family households making up 53% of households, single-person households at 22%, and 40% of people never married. Bachelor degree attainment sits at 24%, healthcare employment at 16% and professional employment at 9%. The persona's median household income is $1,556/week (ABS Census 2021). That sits between Greenacre ($1,429) and Byron Bay ($1,748) within the suburb-level figures, and well below Pendle Hill's $2,057.

Read alongside the review themes, this is a customer who appears to value dependability over price. Reliability is mentioned in 56 of 69 snippets, and service quality and communication in 38 each, while price and value is mentioned just 9 times. Possible interpretation: for a household-oriented borrower in their mid-thirties, often managing a first home, an upgrade or a refinance around family commitments, the broker's job is to make a high-stakes, paperwork-heavy process feel under control. Responsiveness, at 16 mentions, is noticed but appears to be a secondary concern next to getting the outcome reliably right.

These are demographic and review-derived context, not measures of borrowing capacity, loan size or willingness to pay. The 16% healthcare employment share, for example, may suggest a segment with shift-based schedules and particular lender policy considerations, but that is a hypothesis to test with your own client data, not a finding. Run your own suburb through strategique to see whether its persona and review themes match this pooled picture or depart from it.

36 yrs	24%	22%	53%	9%	16%	40%	$1,556/wk
Median age	Bachelor degree+	Single-person households	Family households	Professional employment	Healthcare employment	Never married	Median household income

Derived from ABS Census DataPack fields (2021) attached to each stored market report, averaged across the curated sample. This is a demand-context signal, not a customer survey.

04 / RECOMMENDED NEXT MOVE

What to do with this, in order

1. **Run your own suburb through strategique**
   The four suburbs here show how the comparison works, not where to go. Run the suburb you are actually considering through strategique to get its Strategique Score, competitive density, competitor ratings and review themes set against comparable markets, so your decision rests on location-specific evidence rather than this sample.
2. **Read density and score together, never apart**
   Wollongong's 88/100 density alongside its sample-low score of 31 shows how scale can mislead. When you review your own suburb's results, check whether a high activity signal comes with a crowded field before treating it as opportunity.
3. **Audit incumbents against the reliability theme**
   Reliability appears in 56 of 69 pooled snippets. When you assess your own market, read local competitor reviews specifically for reliability and communication complaints. That is where a rating gap like Pendle Hill's 3.2 against Byron Bay's 5.0 would show up.
4. **Validate thin-evidence markets on the ground**
   If your suburb's results resemble Greenacre's, with very low density and no review data, treat that as a prompt for research rather than a green light. Talk to local agents, accountants and builders to find out who is already writing loans in the area.

5 **Use the linked breakdowns to stress-test**
Before committing, compare your own suburb's results with the linked per-suburb opportunity reports and, where available, their SWOT and Porter's Five Forces breakdowns. They show how buyer power, rivalry and entry barriers shift between market types.

FREQUENTLY ASKED

Common questions on mortgage brokers competition and strategy

Does a large population and lots of brokers mean a suburb is a good place to compete?

Not on this sample's evidence. Wollongong has the largest population (27,883) and the most mapped brokers (35), but it has the lowest Strategique Score at 31, 18 points behind Pendle Hill. Scale signals activity, but heavy density means referral networks and customer attention are likely already contested.

Is a suburb with only one mapped competitor an open market?

Not necessarily. Greenacre has one mapped broker and density of 6/100 against a sample average of 50, but it also has zero review snippets, so there is no local evidence of what customers want. Brokers from neighbouring areas or bank lenders may already service the suburb. Treat low visible density as a hypothesis to test, not proof of unmet demand.

What do mortgage broking customers actually care about in reviews?

Across 69 pooled review snippets, reliability is mentioned 56 times, service quality and communication 38 times each, responsiveness 16 times, and price and value only 9 times. That is consistent with the general industry pattern that broker choice is driven by trust and follow-through rather than price, partly because broker remuneration is typically lender-paid.

Should a high average competitor rating put me off a suburb?

It should change your plan rather than automatically rule the suburb out. Byron Bay's 9 mapped competitors average 5.0/5, the highest in the sample, which suggests customers there are being well served and a new entrant would face a high benchmark. Read the rating alongside density (57 in Byron Bay) and your own ability to match that standard from the start.

Can higher household income tell me how much business a suburb will generate?

No. Pendle Hill's median household income of $2,057/week (ABS Census 2021) is the highest in the sample, but income is context only. It says nothing directly about loan volumes, borrower borrowing capacity or commission outcomes. Test any income-based assumption against local property activity, referral-partner input and your own cost base.

Are customer expectations in this category changing quickly?

The available trend data suggests not. Reliability mentions held flat month-on-month in Wollongong (around 20), Byron Bay (around 16) and Pendle Hill (around 20), each consistent with its trailing two-month average. Possible interpretation: the bar is stable and well understood, so advantage comes from consistently delivering on it rather than chasing new expectations.

What does a low average rating among local competitors suggest?

Pendle Hill's 9 mapped competitors average 3.2/5, the lowest among suburbs with rated listings and well below Byron Bay's 5.0. Hypothesis to test: incumbents may be falling short on reliability and communication, the themes customers mention most. Confirm this by reading the underlying reviews before building a strategy around it.

05 / EVIDENCE NOTES

Methodology and sources

- This report deliberately curates one mortgage brokers market per selected region -- distinct trading archetypes rather than whichever reports happened to run most recently -- so the comparison reflects genuinely different trading conditions.
- Competition and rating measures are read from the stored Google Places competitor records attached to each linked market report.
- Population and household-income context is read from the stored ABS demographic fields attached to each linked market report.
- Customer review snippets for the curated markets are fetched live from Google Places for their top competitors when not already stored, then counted for topic mentions each month to build a trend history. Trend statements compare this month's mention counts to the trailing average, not sentiment scores or a representative survey of all customers.
- The Strategique Score™ and its components are shown exactly as stored at report generation time; this report does not recalculate them.

SOURCES

- strategique published mortgage brokers opportunity reports (stored market report snapshots)
- Google Places competitor listings, ratings, and review snippets for the top competitors in each curated market
- Australian Bureau of Statistics demographic fields captured in those reports

READ THIS WITH CARE

What this report cannot tell you

- This is a curated sample of 4 markets, not a national census of mortgage brokers or customers.
- Google listings and reviews can be incomplete, delayed, or categorised inconsistently.
- Review snippets only cover the top few competitors per market by review volume; missing themes do not mean customers did not discuss them.
- Scores and demographics support early location research only. They do not predict revenue, foot traffic, rent, licensing, staffing, or business success.

Continue the research in strategique

Open the interactive report to continue into each linked opportunity report, Strategique Score, SWOT, and Porter's Five Forces.