

LIVEABLE COMMUNITIES

ATTACHMENT 1

**RURAL STRATEGY SUBMISSIONS –
REZONING REQUESTS, VILLAGES AND
URBAN RELEASE AREAS**

ORDINARY MEETING

25 MAY 2022



MIDCOAST
council



ENGAGEMENT ACTIVITIES

**30 AUGUST 2021 -
28 JANUARY 2022**

**DRAFT
RURAL STRATEGY**

MAY 2022

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INTRODUCTION

This report provides a summary of the engagement and communications activities undertaken between 30 August 2021 and 28 January 2022.

The purpose of this stage of the engagement was to gather feedback from the community on the draft Rural Strategy and ensure that the community and landholders were aware of the proposed changes to relevant land.

Several specific issues were raised during the engagement and these will be outlined and addressed in separate reports, based on key themes that emerged during the engagement.



DRAFT RURAL STRATEGY

How we got the word out

- 6 feature advertisements
- 5,657 people reached on average on social media
- 3 media releases
- 2 radio interviews
- 12 fact sheets produced
- 78 posters distributed
- 3,666 letters sent to landholders
- 2,940 emails sent to stakeholders

How you got involved

- 11,833 views of 'Know your rural zone'
- 5,500 unique visitors 'Know your rural zone'
- 1,322 downloads of Draft MidCoast Rural Strategy
- 4,853 downloads of Draft MidCoast Rural Strategy – Overview
- 5,928 users of the interactive mapping tool
- 587 one-on-one phone calls
- 293 email enquiries
- 674 enquiries with non-urban landholders
- 13 face to face sessions with 125 attendees
- 400+ submissions

Thank you for engaging with us on when the draft Rural Strategy was on public exhibition.

Over a five month period (30 August 2021 – 28 January 2022) we asked the community for feedback on the draft Rural Strategy.

This draft Strategy was developed from previous engagement with community and stakeholders on issues for rural landholders.

The focus for this engagement was to ensure that landholders and key stakeholders were aware of the Rural Strategy and the elements that would impact on them.

The final document is a key component for MidCoast in developing a new Local Environmental Plan and Development Control Plan.

This snapshot provides a short overview of how we got the word out and how people got involved.

What's next?

The feedback gathered from this engagement will be addressed separately within a number of Council reports specific to key issues addressed within the Rural Strategy. Submissions made within this engagement will be used to inform these reports.

BACKGROUND AND PREVIOUS ENGAGEMENT

Background

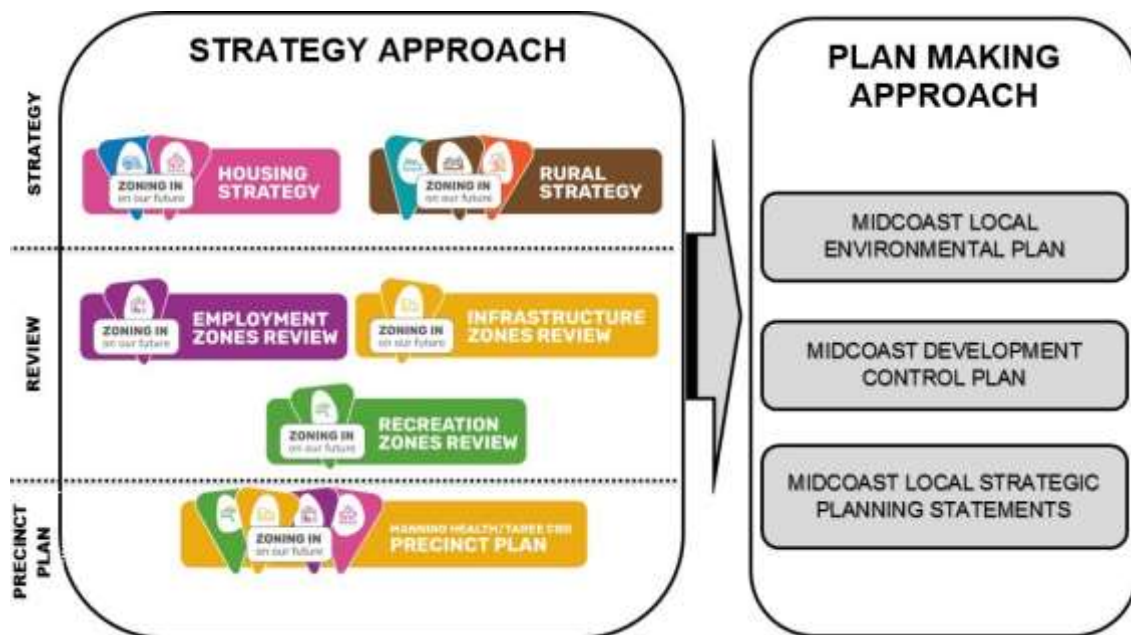
Preparation of the Rural Strategy began in 2017. Since then, there have been numerous points where the community and stakeholders have been involved in providing input into the development of the Draft Rural Strategy.

A key task for MidCoast Council is the review and replacement of planning controls from the three former Council areas to create one set of planning controls for the MidCoast.

The aim is to have planning controls that embrace new and innovative approaches and are consistently applied across our local government area.

The approach is outlined below and involves undertaking strategic studies and reviews, which will then guide our future planning documents - the Local Environmental Plan, Development Control Plan and Local Strategic Planning Statement.

It is important to note that further consultation will occur when we move into the next stages of the *Zoning in on our Future* project - the Local Environmental Plan and Development Control Plan.



The projects outlined in the strategy approach section above have been developed in consultation with Council staff, relevant State Government departments and the MidCoast community.

During 2020 we engaged with the community extensively on the draft Housing Strategy, Employment Zones Review, Infrastructure Zones Review, Recreation Zones Review and Manning Health/Taree CBD Precinct Plan. We also developed, consulted on and adopted the Interim Local Strategic Planning Statement, which will be updated (where necessary) following the adoption of the Rural Strategy.

The Rural Strategy

The Rural Strategy aims to provide clear and consistent land use planning principles to sustainably manage the use of lands and resources outside of our towns and villages.

The strategy will be used to inform preparation of the new MidCoast Local Environmental Plan and Development Control Plan, and to guide well-balanced development and conservation outcomes across our rural landscape into the future.

It looks at how we can protect rural areas by managing land use and development to deliver balanced outcomes for our community.

It does this through an examination of how we apply rural, environmental and waterway zones across the MidCoast.

The rural landscape covers over 90 per cent of our local government area and is a defining feature of the MidCoast.

The landscapes and natural resources found between our coastal waterways and forested ridges provide a range of agricultural and tourism opportunities; connect our towns and villages; enhance our lifestyles; and offer a diverse range of visitor experiences.

The rural zones include:

- RU1 – Primary Production
- RU2 – Rural Landscape
- RU3 – Forestry
- RU4 – Primary Production Small Lots
- RU5 – Village
- C1 – National Parks and Nature Reserves
- C2 – Environmental Conservation
- C3 – Environmental Management
- C4 – Environmental Living
- W1 – Natural Waterways
- W2 – Recreational Waterways
- W3 – Working Waterways

While the changes foreshadowed in the draft strategy and reviews do not come into place until the eventual adoption of the new Local Environment Plan and Development Control Plan, the documents provide information that allows the community to understand the process and the impacts.

Previous engagement

There has been extensive engagement and communication with the community during the development of the draft Rural Strategy. Much of this engagement has been targeted towards key stakeholders, who have a direct interest in the outcomes of the Rural Strategy.

The following section provides an overview of the various engagement activities that have occurred since April 2017.



Tourism workshop

In June 2018 a workshop was held in Gloucester to understand how planning controls could be best used to enable tourism operators to meet their needs and future aspirations in rural locations. Invitations were emailed to 385 tourism operators and rural landholders. The event was promoted MidCoast wide via traditional and social media outlets, as well as internal promotion to Council staff. A total of 40 people registered their attendance on the day.

Internal and State government workshops

Four topic-specific workshops were held with local and state government representatives, in July 2018. The workshop aimed to get a better understanding of the current policy framework, operational considerations, current information and mapping available, as well as identify gaps in current data. The workshop topics were:

- Emergency management and response;
- Environment;
- Economy;
- Infrastructure.

Forty people attended the four workshops across the day. Additionally, a second internal workshop was held in September of the same year to further discuss spatial planning, zone selection and minimum lot sizes. This workshop was attended by 16 Council staff.

State government meetings

Several individual meetings have been held between 2017 and 2020 with State agency partners with a direct interest in the Rural Strategy outcomes. This has included:

- NSW Department of Planning and Environment (formerly Department of Planning, Industry and Environment), including several meetings to discuss progress and any relevant changes to State or regional level matters that would affect the Rural Strategy project;
- NSW Department of Primary Industry – Agriculture, including several meetings to discuss progress of the Important Agricultural Land mapping project, and preferred methods for considering planning controls as relevant to productive agricultural areas;
- NSW Department of Planning and Environment – Biodiversity and Conservation Division (formerly Office of Environment and Heritage) and Hunter Councils joint meeting to discuss regional vegetation mapping.

Development industry workshop

As key users of the final Rural Strategy, representatives of the development sector were invited to discuss issues relevant to planning in rural areas and possible solutions, at a workshop held in September 2018.

Email invitations were sent to a stakeholder list of 242 people and included planning consultants, surveyors, developers, builders and real estate agents, with 11 people attending the workshop.

Public survey



To enable further detailed feedback from the community on the range of issues relevant to rural areas, a survey was developed in September 2018. This was an opportunity for those who couldn't participate in a workshop or had further feedback to contribute. The survey was made available in hard copy and on our website.

As well as promotion via media release, advertising in local papers and social media, a direct link was also sent, via email, to 825 registered businesses in the MidCoast area, in the sectors of:

- aquaculture and environmental groups (15);
- agricultural businesses (483);
- agriculture and mining suppliers (45);
- tourism operators (37);
- development industry (Construction, planning and real estate agents) (242).

The survey was completed by 63 people.

Direct phone calls and mini interviews

It was evident further into the engagement that gaining feedback from particular sectors was difficult, particularly face to face engagement with representatives of the agriculture and aquaculture industries.

To address this, the Rural Strategy team changed some strategies to target these groups. Using a comprehensive contact list, targeted phone calls and emails, consultation was undertaken focused on tourism, waterways and agriculture businesses sectors and their peak bodies.



The list included:

- tourism – 77 businesses;
- waterways/Aquaculture – 31 businesses;
- agriculture – 57 businesses.

Of those on the list, mini interviews were undertaken in order to obtain more detailed feedback on the issues and opportunities. The questions included:

- What are the biggest opportunities / challenges facing their industry?
- What is their experience with 'planning' to date?
- Is there anything specific they would like to see the Rural Strategy address?

A total of 59 mini interviews were undertaken which included 39 (tourism), 10 (waterways / aquaculture) and 10 (agriculture), 12 of which have been with representatives of peak bodies.

Rural issues papers

Following the engagement process between April 2018 and November 2018, in order to check in with previous participants and interested community members on the issues being raised and potential solutions, Rural Issues Summary Papers were developed in 2019.

These were sent directly via email to those who registered an expression of interest (232 at that point in time), attended a previous workshop, or submitted a survey on the Rural Strategy. The Papers were also made available on our website and in hard copy at Council Office locations.

Councillor workshops 2020-21

Workshops were held with Councillors between November 2020 and May 2021 and focussed on key rural, environmental and waterway recommendations. Additional issues were identified for review and inclusion in the Rural Strategy in villages and paper subdivisions in response to the Urban Zoning In exhibition and community submissions received during this consultation program (February – April 2020).

Internal workshops 2021

A series of workshops were held in February, March and April 2021, revisiting the following issues with key internal stakeholders from across Council:

- agriculture and rural industries, in response to the DPIE proposed amendments to agriculture;
- transport and infrastructure, including water, sewage servicing and on-site sewage disposal;
- marine areas and rural waterways, including the identification and protection of priority drinking water catchments, in response to the drought and water scarcity in the MidCoast. This matter was also discussed within the water resilience team, with DPIE in attendance;
- housing and accommodation, including the review of RU4 Primary Production Small Lot zone, C4 Environmental Living zone; land within paper subdivisions; and the outcome of the planning proposal to amend the R1 General Residential Zone in Greater Taree LEP 2010 in relation to manufactured home estates;
- rural tourism and conservation, in response to the concurrent Biodiversity Framework,



Manning Valley Estuary and Catchment Management Plan programs and the DPIE proposed amendments to agriculture;

- agriculture, rural industries, extractive industries and energy production in response to the concurrent Climate Change policy and the DPIE proposed amendments to agriculture and new State energy policies;
- zones and land use in rural, environmental and waterways areas in response to the DPIE Planning Reform Program, including draft amendments to agriculture, housing, design and place, flood planning and the planning proposal review programs.

Stakeholder register

A stakeholder register for the Rural Strategy project was initially established in March 2018 and has been continuously updated as the project progresses. To date, the register includes:

- Department of Primary Industry - Agriculture's Important Agricultural Land mapping project contact list (30);
- Department of Premier and Cabinet's Rural Economic Development Strategy project contact list (205);
- existing Council lists:
 - Estuary Management Committees (45);
 - Council's 'Tourism Partner List' (325);
 - meeting records from Great Lakes Council's Poultry Excellence meetings in 2015 (15);
 - Rural Strategy project's telephone mini-interviews (people suggested 25 additional contacts).
- Rural Strategy consultants' research and Federal / State Agency identification;
- Australian Business Register database of target industries:
 - Aquaculture and environmental groups (15);
 - Agricultural businesses (483);
 - Agriculture and mining suppliers (45);
 - Tourism operators (37);
 - Development industry (construction, planning and real estate agents) (242).
- North Arm Cove Local Community Plan submissions from non-urban land holders (63).

Rural Strategy database

The community was also given the opportunity to register- interest in the range of strategic planning projects currently underway, via the Council website.

As of June 2021, a total of 1,043 people were on the rural strategy email database and contacted at regular intervals with progress updates and upcoming engagement activities prior to the formal exhibition process commencing in August 2021. It is noted that of this list, a number are non-urban landowners.

Direct emails to agency representatives and Council staff

In March 2018, 366 letters were sent to agency stakeholders – including Federal, State, regional and



local government agencies, Local Aboriginal Land Councils and peak industry groups - outlining the Rural Strategy project, its purpose and inviting participation.

A total of 82 staff within state agencies were also emailed directly to be informed of the project and invited to attend a workshop. A total of 16 representatives expressed an interest in participating and attending future workshops.

Internal staff were also included as key stakeholders in the engagement, with many staff targeted due to the roles they represent. Additionally, regular communication was provided to all staff both in direct emails and promotion via the intranet, as representatives of the broader community. For the purpose of this summary, Council staff have only been counted once as part of the reach of communication, being 800 people.

Council website

Specific information on the draft rural and urban strategies has been available, and regularly updated, on Council's website since 2018. The Zoning in on our Future hub has focused on projects relevant to the LEP planning strategies, including the Rural Strategy, and has been well-utilised by the community as a source of information and link to key engagement activities. Most recently information on the draft Rural Strategy has been placed on the 'have your say' section of the website to allow those who have an interest to follow the issue and receive updates.



METHODOLOGY

Engagement approach

The engagement on the draft Rural Strategy was designed to ensure landholders and the wider community were aware of the elements that may impact them. To achieve this the engagement approach included:

- direct communication with landholders where significant zone changes were being considered, to provide them with information on what the Rural Strategy means for them, their property and its future;
- mapping solutions for property owners to access via the MidCoast Council website to provide oversight of the potential impacts on their property and changes to properties around them;
- opportunities for property owners to engage directly with land use planners on what the strategy means to them, through a variety of activities including individual phone consultations, zoom sessions, small group talks, or individual in-person sessions;
- information provided through a range of communication channels to ensure all members of the community, whether impacted landowners or not, have the opportunity to learn about the implications of the draft Rural Strategy.

Timeframe

The Consultation and Communication Strategy outlined a minimum eight-week period for people to provide feedback. It was identified early in the engagement period that over 70% of enquiries and submissions had been from owners of paper subdivisions. Due to the high level of interest regarding a specific key area, as well as Covid-19 restrictions, a decision was made to extend the engagement period by an additional 14 weeks, to a total of 22 weeks.

This additional time allowed the project team to be more proactive in seeking input from a broader cross section of locations across the LGA, and to further explore additional key focus areas relevant to the Rural Strategy, including during holiday periods.



Level of engagement

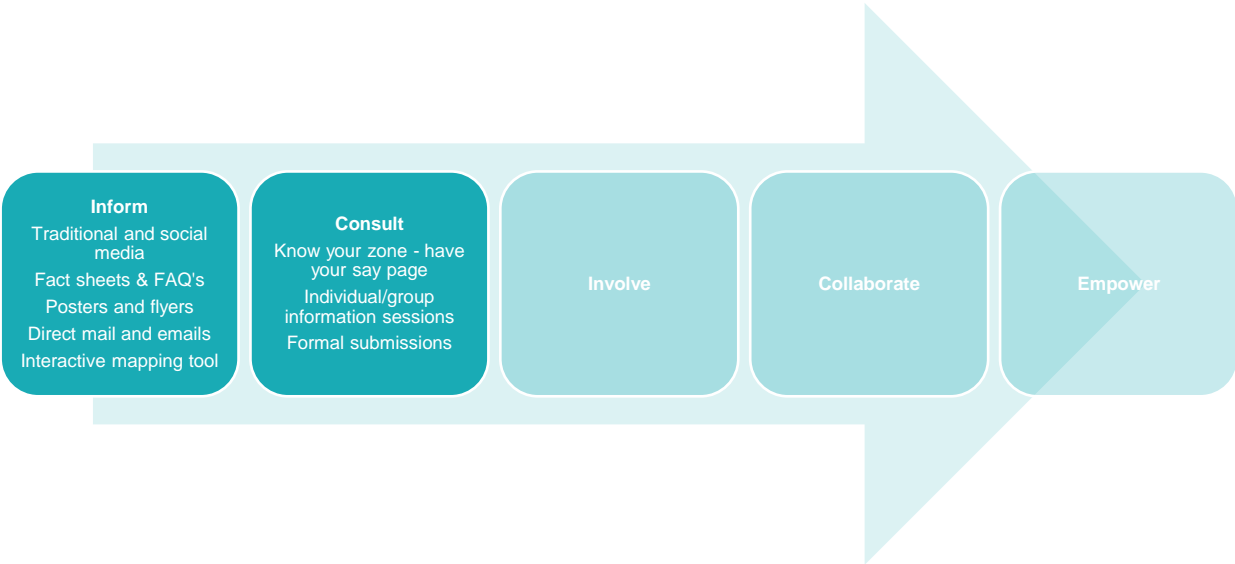
The engagement approach within the Consultation and Communication Strategy considered the International Association for Public Participation’s (IAP2) five-point framework, as well as the legislative framework that the Rural Strategy would sit within, including those relevant to the Local Environmental Plan and Development Control Plan, to determine the level of engagement.

Within these requirements the engagement achieved a level of inform and consult. At this level we aim to:

Inform - to provide the public with balanced and objective information to assist them in understanding the problem, alternatives, benefits and/or solutions;

Consult - to obtain public feedback on the project and/or alternatives.

The diagram below shows the levels of engagement and the activities undertaken within each level.



Key stakeholders

The engagement targeted a range of key stakeholders including:

- rural landholders;
- industry groups;
- Village residents;
- landholders in non-urban land/paper subdivisions;
- ratepayers;
- groups of individuals, organisations, community groups, service providers;
- local businesses including Chambers of commerce, Stock Agents, Conveyancers, Surveyors, Planning Consultants, Real estate agents;
- Local Aboriginal Land Councils;
- Federal and State members;
- State agencies;
- Councillors;
- Council staff.

Consultation activities were designed to target these groups.

Additional to these stakeholders, the project team used established email lists, including the Rural Strategy database. How this database was established is outlined in the previous engagement section of this report. The group has grown considerably across the life of the project and now consists of 1124 members. It was used throughout the engagement process to inform the community of opportunities and key dates.

Key messages

The key messages delivered during the project were:

- currently we have three Local Environmental Plans that have different approaches resulting in inconsistent planning across the MidCoast;
- having one MidCoast planning framework will provide more certainty for the development industry and the community and will achieve good planning outcomes;
- the strategy guides well-balanced development and conservation outcomes across our rural landscape into the future;
- the strategy looks at ways we can identify and protect productive land and water resources, provide accommodation and services for rural communities and manage development in rural environments;
- it provides a consolidated platform which considers how land and water resources outside our towns and villages are expected to be used and developed in the coming decades;
- it will establish a program of actions Council can take to facilitate the sustainable use of the region's assets;
- this is not the only chance to be involved in the development of the MidCoast planning controls – this will continue at key stages in the development of the LEP and DCP controls.

Specific key messages were developed for the individual zoning groups and issues relevant to the draft strategy and review documents. These were used as a part of the fact sheets and information shared with landholders at targeted sessions.



Communication activities

Media releases

Released periodically across the engagement to provide information about the Rural Strategy and scheduled activities.

- Media release (1) – 31 August 2021 (exhibition now open);
- Media release (2) – 3 November 2021 (extension to close date, announcement of face-to-face sessions);
- Media release (3) – 21 January 2022 (exhibition closing soon).

News Wrap e-newsletter

The Rural Strategy was a regular feature story within our weekly News Wrap e-newsletter. This newsletter had around 1100 recipients at that time. Across the engagement period, the Rural Strategy featured seven times. The specific dates, number of recipients and opens is outlined below:

Date	Recipients	Opens
3 September 2021	1119	601
10 September 2021	1129	628
17 September 2021	1136	606
24 September 2021	1140	597
5 November 2021 (Lead story)	1175	691
19 November 2021	1194	612
26 November 2021	1203	720



Advertisements

The Rural Strategy featured regularly in our weekly advertisements run across the three major local newspapers, promoting the overall consultation and scheduled activities. This included:

- Rural Strategy featured within “Have your say” section as a dot point every week from 1 September 2021 until 28 January 2022;
- advertising in Council’s weekly Community News column in the following Manning River Times, Gloucester Advocate and Great Lakes Advocate, including:
 - 1-2 September 2021 – Draft Rural Strategy open for feedback;
 - 8-9 September 2021 – Draft Rural Strategy open for feedback;
 - 22-24 September 2021 – Draft Rural Strategy open for feedback;
 - 10-12 November 2021 – Know your rural zone;
 - 17-19 November 2021 – Know your rural zone;
 - 19-21 January 2022 – Draft Rural Strategy closing soon.

Extracts of advertisements are included in Appendix A.

Social media

Regular posts across the engagement period promoting the Rural Strategy engagement and how stakeholders can be involved. These included:

Date	Key message	Reach
2 September 2021	Rural Strategy open for engagement – link to have your say	5,645
4 November 2021	Book an individual appointment – Link to have your say and Customer Service phone number	9,716
10 November 2021	Focus on sessions in Wootton and Krambach – Link to customer service and Have your say	6,466
18 November 2021	Focus on Gloucester, Stroud, Mondrook, Cooperbrook and Mitchells Island - Link to customer service and Have your say	1,870
26 November 2021	Focus on Mondrook, Cooperbrook and Mitchells Island - Link to customer service and Have your say	2,984
21 January 2022	Promotion of closing date – link to Have your say	7,259

The average reach for each post was 5657. Extracts of social media posts are included in Appendix B.

Radio

Radio was used as a promotion tool for the Rural Strategy, including:



- radio segment (2RE) – 8 September and 10 November 2021.

Fact sheets

Production of 12 detailed fact sheets, including detailed information on key focus areas within the Rural Strategy. These were made available on the Know your zone have your say page.

Topics included:

- Rural Strategy;
- Paper subdivisions;
- Looking after the environment;
- Water security and aquifers;
- Tourism and visitor accommodation;
- Rural landscape zone;
- Environmental living zone;
- Looking after our waterways;
- Know your recreation zone;
- Know your infrastructure zone;
- Village zone;
- Large lot residential zone.

Posters

Posters promoting the Rural Strategy and one on one appointments across the MidCoast LGA were distributed to libraries, district offices, rural supply stores, community halls and service stations.

The poster was distributed to 78 locations. An example of the LGA wide poster is included in Appendix C. Specific location posters were distributed to those communities where rural appointments were scheduled.



Engagement activities summary

Direct mail

A total of 3,666 direct mailings were sent to property owners where a major zone change is proposed with a specific message about potential changes and how they can participate in the consultation and provide feedback for consideration.

Personalised letters, targeting property-owners where significant zone changes were proposed:

Area/zoning changes targeted	Date/s	Number
Rural to Environmental living	25 August 2021	259
Village to Rural	25 August 2021	21
Rural to Environmental Conservation	25 August 2021	1
Flood prone land at Bulahdelah	25 August 2021	35
Flood prone land at Coopernook	25 August 2021	<25
Flood prone land at Wingham	25 August 2021	145
Aquifer catchments at Nabiac and Tea Gardens	25 August 2021	220
Land within identified Paper subdivisions	25 August 2021	2915
Large Lot Residential to Village at Bundook	25 August 2021	30
Rural to Village at Mount George	25 August 2021	42



Direct email

There were 2,940 direct emails sent to inform all contacts on our email databases of the consultation period and opportunities to participate in the consultation program and link to the 'Know your Rural Zone' Have Your Say webpage.

Date	Recipients	Purpose
31 August 2021	1,150	Notification of opening of exhibition to Rural Strategy database
9 September 2021	28	Notification of opening of exhibition to State agencies
9 September 2021	1	Direct email to Department of Planning, Industry and Environment
10 September 2021	1	Direct email to Department of Primary Industries – Agriculture
13 September 2021	1	Direct email to NSW Rural Fire Service
26 October 2021	306	Notification of extension to engagement process and opportunity for presentation to stakeholder groups
26 October 2021	201	Update on engagement process to Rural Strategy database
26 October 2021	100	Update on engagement process to those who already made a submission
26 October 2021	28	Update on engagement process to State agencies
4 November 2021	1,124	Notification of extension and new engagement activities to Rural Strategy database



Have your say webpage

The 'Know your Rural Zone' – Have your say page was the central hub of information on the project. The website provided a comprehensive collection of information, to enable people to be informed of the Rural Strategy, the purpose of the engagement and how they could get involved.

Information available on the site included:

- Draft MidCoast Rural Strategy (Download and flip book view);
- Draft MidCoast Rural Strategy - Overview (Download and flip book view);
- rural zoning in mapping tool;
- zones in focus tool;
- project timeline;
- document library including detailed background reports on key topics and the Engagement and Communication Strategy;
- direct link to Paper Subdivisions Analysis Report;
- frequently asked questions;
- link to downloadable fact sheets on key focus areas.

Engagement tools on the site included:

- invitation to make a call-back appointment request;
- direct rural@midcoast.nsw.gov.au email address for online enquiries;
- submission form.

Visitor statistics from the Know your rural zone site demonstrate that there was a high level of engagement with the page and the information available. Key visitation statistics include:

- total views of Know your Rural Zone - Have your say page 11,833;
- percentage of visits that lasted at least 1 active minute – 45.48%;
- total unique visitors 5,500;
- total online submissions made 138;
- fact sheets and FAQ's subpage visited 712 by 494 unique visitors;
- total document downloads 6,593;
- total views of Draft MidCoast Rural Strategy (including downloads and Flip book views) 1,322;
- total views of Draft MidCoast Rural Strategy – Overview (including downloads and Flip book views) 4,853.

The table in Appendix D, provides a breakdown of the downloads for each document available on the Know your rural zone page during the engagement period. This information is useful as it provides an indication of the interest in topics relevant to the Rural Strategy.



Interactive mapping tool

The Know Your Zone interactive mapping tool was available on the Have your say page with a usage of 5928 times. It allowed people to search for their address and view the changes that may apply to them. This tool provided understanding of how the Draft Rural Strategy would impact individual properties. People could then access information as to what the zoning definitions were and contact Council via phone, email, or a face-to-face session to answer questions or raise concerns.

Individual information sessions - Phone, email, in-person

Information sessions provide landholders with an opportunity to have a one-on-one conversation with our planning team about the strategy and what it will mean for their individual circumstances, either via email, phone, or via an in-person session at relevant locations across the local government area. There was a total of:

- 587 phone calls;
- 293 email enquiries.

Individual Rural Appointments

As the Covid-19 restrictions were eased over the course of the exhibition period, the Rural Strategy team was able to travel around the MidCoast and host one-on-one sessions for interested individuals. Anyone who attended these sessions was required to book in a 30-minute time slot to ensure the sessions complied with the Covid-19 restrictions.

In person, one-on-one sessions were offered at the 10 locations outlined in the table below.

Date	Venue	Attendance
9 November 2021	Tea Gardens	Rescheduled
10 November 2021	Bulahdelah School of Arts	2
11 November 2021	Pacific Palms	20
16 November 2021	Wootton Community Hall	5
17 November 2021	Krambach Hall	8
23 November 2021	Gloucester	6
24 November 2021	Stroud	2
30 November 2021	Mondrook	7
1 December 2021	Coopernook	3
2 December 2021	Mitchells Island	6
8 December 2021	Tea Gardens	7

A total of 10 rural appointment sessions were held with a total of 66 attendees.

Information sessions/webinars for groups



ENGAGEMENT OUTCOMES REPORT

For target groups or groups that asked for a specific meeting to explain changes, the team prepared a presentation tailored to the location or group to raise awareness of issues in that area. These sessions were also provided in an online format for stakeholder groups for members who live outside the LGA or were unable to attend drop-in sessions.

The details of the group sessions are outlined in the table below:

Date	Venue	Attendance
9 December 2021	Pacific Palms (group request by landowners notified of potential change from Rural to Environmental Living zone)	20
13 December 2021	North Arm Cove Community Association (Zoom session)	29
14 December 2021	Nabiac Showground	10

One online and two face-to-face group sessions were held with a total of 59 attendees.

Formal submissions

Across the engagement period, there were 430 submissions, including the 138 received via the online submission form. The content of these submissions will be detailed in separate reports to Council, focusing on specific high-level topics relevant to the Rural Strategy.

Locations

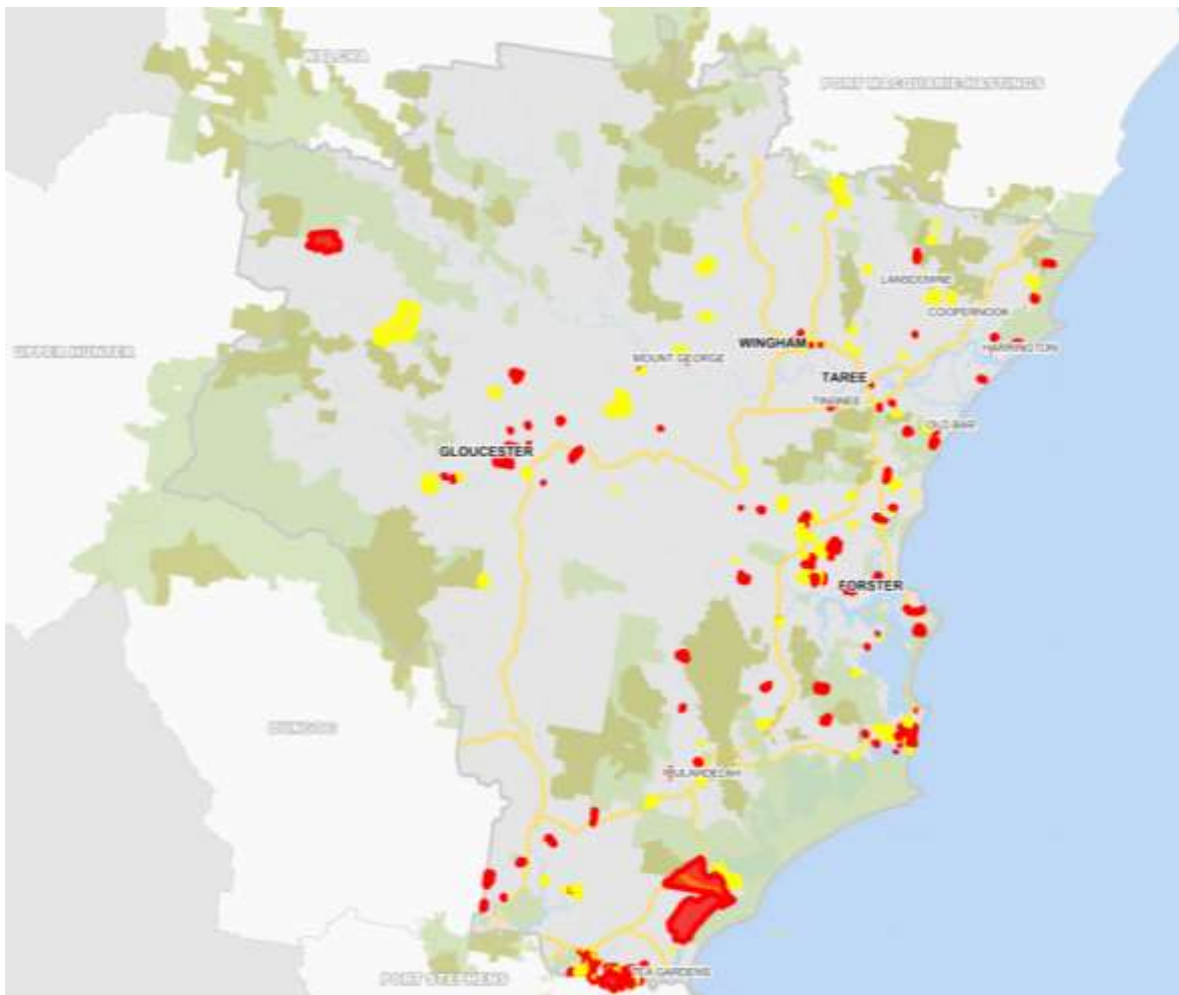
Throughout the engagement period, the property locations of enquiries and submissions were recorded. This allowed the engagement activities to be adaptive and target additional locations where representation hadn't been achieved.

The map below shows all the locations. The yellow sections are an email or phone call with no follow up submission.

The red sections are either a submission without a related call or email or a submission relating to a call or email

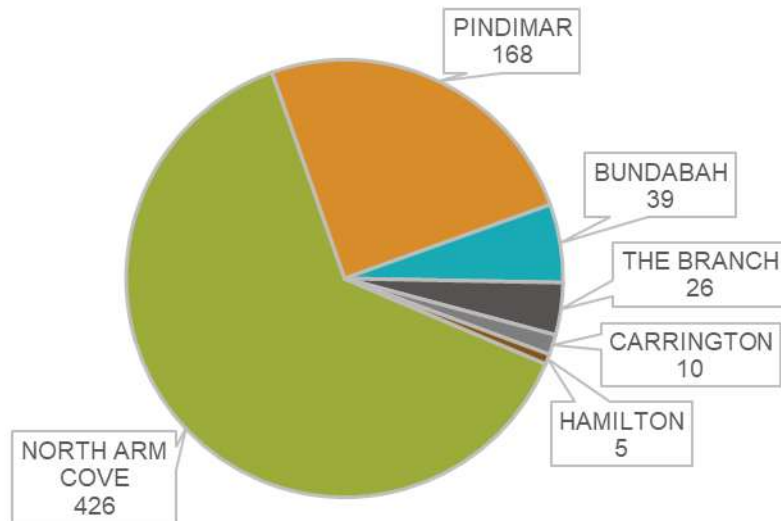
This map demonstrates that there was involvement from a broad cross-section of locations across the whole MidCoast LGA.

A list of all the locations for enquiries is listed in Appendix E.



A significant number of enquiries were received which were relevant to non-urban land. Of these 674 enquiries the specific locations are shown in the pie chart below.





Impacts on engagement

There were several events that impacted on the engagement, which are outlined below.

COVID-19 restrictions

Between the engagement period of 30 August 2021 and 28 January 2022, there were significant variables in the COVID-19 restrictions that were in place for our region.

Initially there were strict restrictions, lock-down and work from home requirements for Council officers, which the engagement program responded to, through the establishment of a Customer Service call-back appointment booking system and establishment of a direct email enquiry process.

Once the Covid-19 restrictions started to ease in October and the exhibition period was extended, a series of rural one-on-one appointment sessions and the opportunity to schedule online and small community group sessions were able to be scheduled through November and December, prior to the holiday period.

Response rate

At the start of the engagement period there was significant involvement from landholders of non-urban land/paper subdivisions. While relevant to the draft Rural Strategy, the focus on this single issue was skewing the data, so a targeted approach to consult with other rural landholders needed to be implemented in conjunction with the lifting of public health orders.

The project team identified this issue early and adapted the planned engagement activities to ensure there was a significant response rate from landholders across the broader MidCoast.

Other Council engagement activities

Council also held a number of other engagement projects adjacent or alongside the draft Rural Strategy engagement, which impacted on responses. Similarity in key messaging and engagement

tools, meant that responses were themed with similar issues. This included the rates harmonisation information campaign and the North Arm Cove Local Community Plan.

APPENDICES

Appendix A: Extracts of feature advertisements

The following provides extracts from our weekly feature advertisements within the major local newspapers.

Extract of advertisement for “Have your say”

The draft Rural Strategy featured as a dot point every week from 1 September 2021 until 28 January 2022



We are seeking community feedback on:

- Draft Rural Strategy
- Gloucester Sewage Treatment Plant Planning Proposal
- MidCoast Housing Strategy amendment - Pebbly Beach
- Kolodong Precinct Development Control Plan amendment
- Bulahdelah Highway Service Centre Planning Proposal
- Proposed road naming - Diamond Beach
- Gloucester Local Community Plan
- Integrated development proposal DA-171/2020 - 741 lot subdivision - Myall Way, Tea Gardens

Visit the Have Your Say page on our website for further info.



Extract of advertisement from weekly Community News column

Featured in the Manning River Times, Gloucester Advocate & Great Lakes Advocate, for the following dates:

- 1-2 September 2021
- 8-9 September 2021
- 22-24 September 2021

Draft Rural Strategy open for feedback



Our rural areas make up 95% of the region, making them a defining feature of the MidCoast. Right now, we're seeking feedback on a draft Strategy that proposes a new planning framework for our waterways, rural and environmental lands which contain a diverse range of resources and amenities that underpin our lifestyle and livelihoods. The draft Rural Strategy is part of a broader project to develop consistent, region-wide planning controls to replace the three we are currently working with.

Find out more and have your say on the draft Rural Strategy: www.haveyoursay.midcoast.nsw.gov.au before Friday 19 November. You can also arrange a by-phone appointment with our Land Use Planning team to discuss how the proposed changes impact your property by calling us on 7955 7777.



Extract of advertisement from weekly Community News column

Featured in the Manning River Times, Gloucester Advocate & Great Lakes Advocate, for the following dates:

- 10-12 November 2021
- 17-19 November 2021

Know your rural zone



The draft Rural Strategy is currently open for feedback, and if you haven't had a chance to learn about what the proposed changes mean for you, it's not too late.

We're currently visiting rural locations across the region, offering one-on-one appointments with our planning team. As well as outlining how land and water resources outside our towns and villages will be used and developed in the future, they'll give you an overview of what's being proposed in your area and answer questions specific to your property.

Upcoming locations include Wootton, Krambach and Gloucester, but visit the Have Your Say page on our website for a full list of locations, venues, dates and times.

Bookings are essential by phoning 7955 7777.

Head online for more information about the draft Rural Strategy, ways to contact our team, and to make a submission.

Feedback on the draft Rural Strategy is invited until 4pm on Friday 28 January 2022.

Extract of advertisement from weekly Community News column

Featured in the Manning River Times, Gloucester Advocate & Great Lakes Advocate, for the following dates:

- 19-21 January 2022

Draft Rural Strategy closing soon

The draft Rural Strategy is currently open for feedback, and if you haven't had a chance to learn about what the proposed changes mean for you, hurry, submissions close next week.

Head online for more information about the draft Rural Strategy and to make a submission.


Feedback on the draft Rural Strategy is invited until 4.30pm on Friday 28 January 2022.



Appendix B: Extracts of Social Media posts

The following are extracts of posts from MidCoast Council’s Facebook page regarding the Rural Strategy. The extracts also include post insights, which provide an indication of sentiment towards the project.

Extract of Facebook post and post insights – 2 September 2021



MidCoast Council

2 September 2021


#Mooooo

It's easy to love our local countryside when you consider that it makes up over 95% of the total MidCoast region! To achieve just the right balance between protecting our natural landscapes, and providing opportunities for business, recreation and tourism, we've developed a draft Rural Strategy and we want your feedback.

In it, we're proposing a new planning framework for waterways, rural and environmental lands – those areas outside our towns and villages that underpin our lifestyles and for many, our livelihoods. Changes proposed include applying a single rural zone, and a consistent minimum lot size of 40 hectares – but there's a lot more to it, so jump online to find out more => www.haveyoursay.midcoast.nsw.gov.au where you'll also find details of how to contact our land use planners to discuss how the proposed changes impact you.

Feedback is invited until 4.30pm Friday 19 November

#KnowYourZone



Post insights

#Mooooo It's easy to love our local countryside when you consider that it makes up over 95% of the total...

2 September 2021

Post impressions

6,054

Post reach

5,645

Post engagement

332

Distribution

average performance as your other posts within 21+ days of being published. [Learn more](#)

Interactions

Reactions

47

Comments

2

Link clicks

50

Shares

10

Other clicks

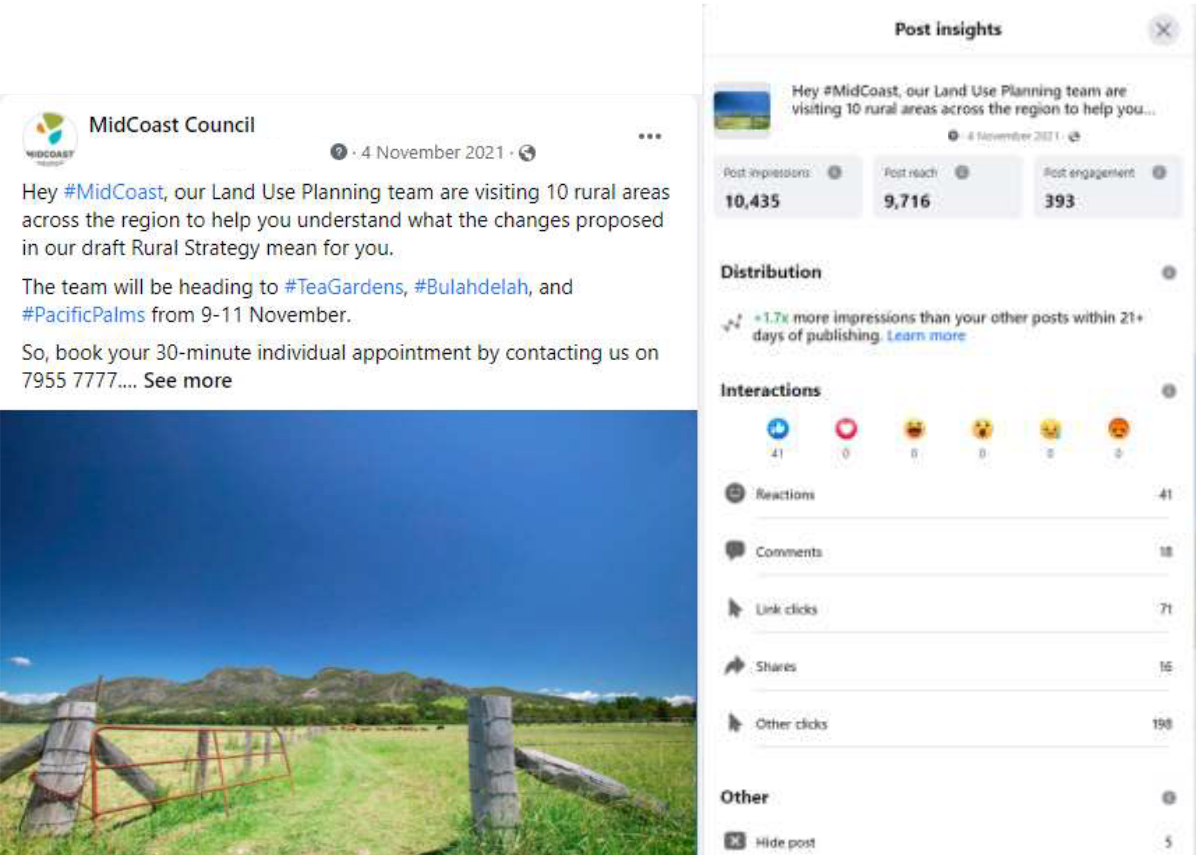
198

Other

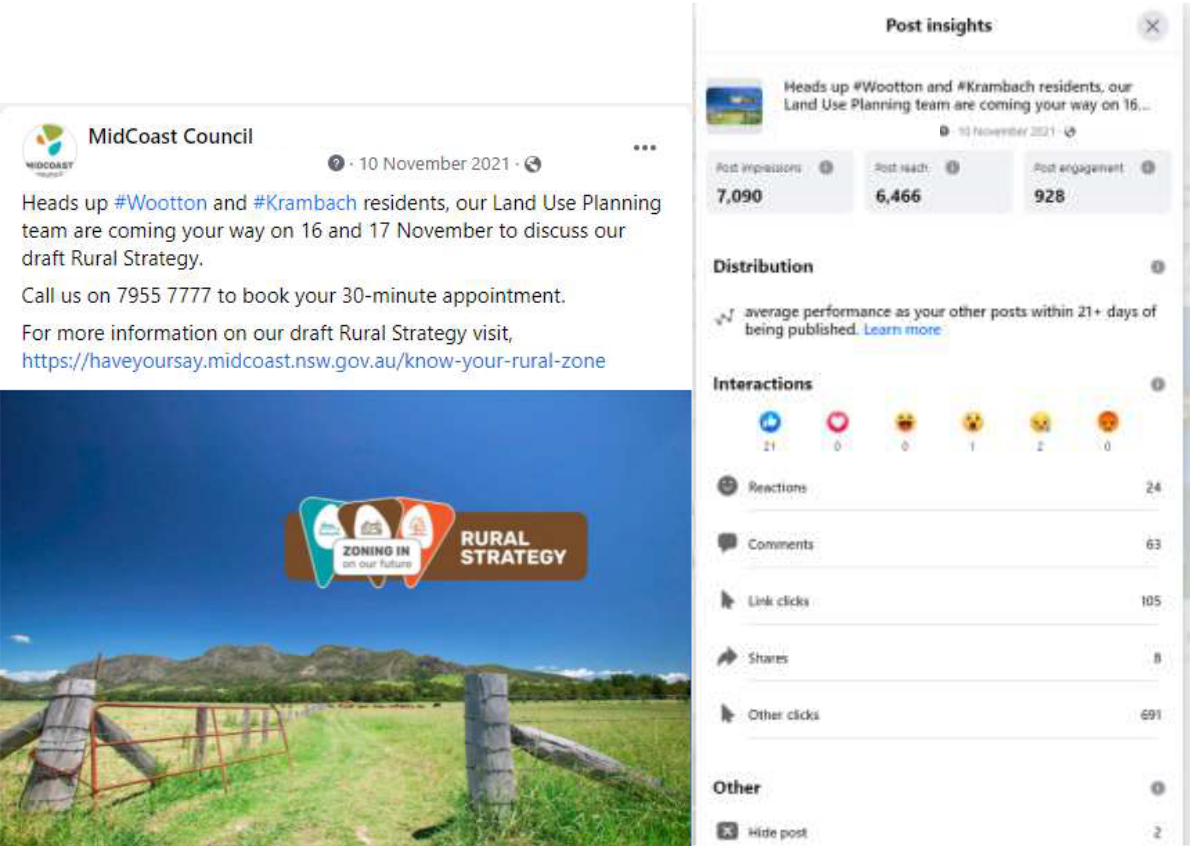
Hide post

2

Extract of Facebook post and post insights – 4 November 2021



Extract of Facebook post and post insights – 10 November 2021



Extract of Facebook post and post insights – 18 November 2021



MidCoast Council

18 November 2021


Our Draft Rural Strategy focuses on managing land resources, and our Land Use Planning team is heading out again to help you understand the proposed changes.

The team will be in [#Gloucester](#), [#Stroud](#) and [#Mondrook](#) on 23, 24 and 30 November, then at [#Coopernook](#) and [#MitchellsIsland](#) on 1 and 2 December.

Call us on 7955 7777 to register for your 30-minute appointment...
See more



Post insights



Our Draft Rural Strategy focuses on managing land resources, and our Land Use Planning team is headin...

18 November 2021

Post impressions

1,955

Post reach

1,870

Post engagement

14

Distribution

-3.1x less impressions than your other posts within 21+ days of publishing. [Learn more](#)

Interactions

Like

5

Love

0

Wow

5

Sad

0

Angry

0

Surprised

0

Reactions

5

Comments

0

Link clicks

1

Shares

1

Other clicks

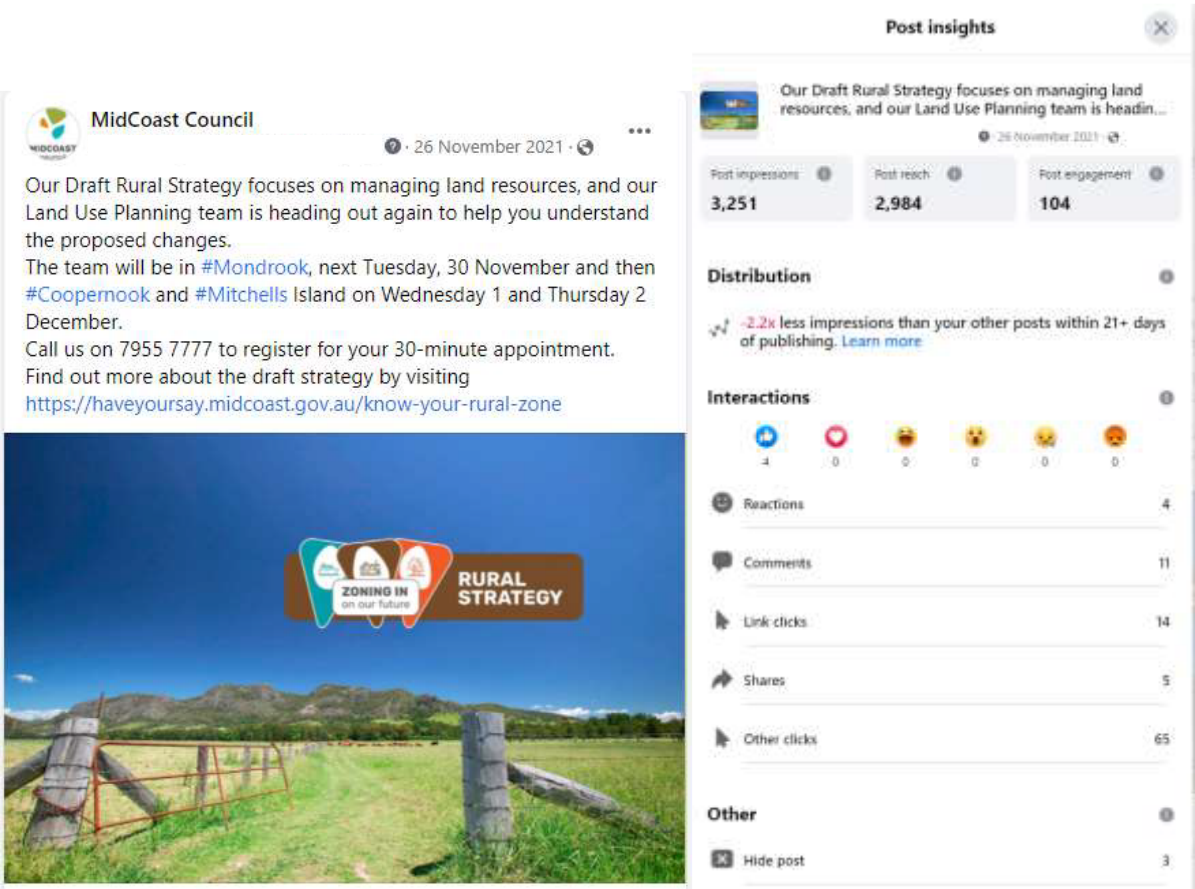
4

Other


Hide post

3

Extract of Facebook post and post insights – 26 November 2021




Extract of Facebook post and post insights – 21 January 2022




MidCoast Council

21 January

Hey everyone in the #MidCoast - if you're like me and you love our local countryside, get involved and help our council achieve just the right balance between protecting our natural landscapes, and providing opportunities for business, recreation and tourism. 🙌
Feedback on the draft Rural Strategy closes next Friday 28 January, so if you're late to the party, jump online to find out more and have your say => <https://bit.ly/3qIPYqu>
#KnowYourZone



Post insights



Hey everyone in the #MidCoast - if you're like me and you love our local countryside, get involved and help...

21 January

Post impressions

7,709

Post reach

7,259


Post engagement

127


Distribution

average performance as your other posts within 21+ days of being published. [Learn more](#)


Interactions




41




1




0



0



0



0

Reactions

42

Comments

1

Link clicks

14

Shares

13

Other clicks

37

Other

Hide post

5

Hide all posts

—

34

Appendix C: Poster example



MIDCOAST
council



RURAL STRATEGY



RURAL APPOINTMENTS NOW AVAILABLE

Find out what's being proposed in your rural area

Our draft Rural Strategy is currently open for feedback so now's the time to explore how land and water resources outside our towns and villages will be used and developed in the future.

Our land use planning team will be visiting rural areas across the region, offering personalised appointments to help you understand what the proposed changes mean for you.

Arrange an appointment to find out about changes to:

- Planning controls in rural areas
- Land use and on-farm activities
- How we identify waterways and steep land
- Environmental living areas

Know your rural zone - register for a personalised 30-minute appointment by calling us on 7955 7777.

Have your say on the draft Rural Strategy before 4.30pm on Friday 28 January 2022. Scan the QR code or visit www.haveyoursay.midcoast.nsw.gov.au to review the draft Strategy and to make a submission.

Tea Gardens 9 November
 Bulahdelah 10 November
 Pacific Palms 11 November
 Wootton 16 November
 Krambach 17 November
 Gloucester 23 November
 Stroud 24 November
 Mondrook 30 November
 Coopernook 1 December
 Mitchells Island 2 December

Bookings are essential:

Phone 7955 7777 to register.
 Appointments available 1pm - 6pm
 Please note: Masks must be worn during your appointment, and you may be required to show proof of vaccination.



We're zoning in on the zones used across the MidCoast to develop a clear, consistent planning framework that will guide the way we manage land use across the entire region. The Rural Strategy is part of this overarching project which reviews land use across our urban, rural, recreation, infrastructure and employment zones. Scan the QR code to find out more.



midcoast.nsw.gov.au

Appendix D: List of document downloads for Know your rural zone 'Have your say' page

Document	Downloads
Draft MidCoast Rural Strategy	1314
(Flipbook version) Draft MidCoast Rural Strategy	8
Draft MidCoast Rural Strategy - Overview	1147
(Flipbook version) Draft MidCoast Rural Strategy - Overview	3,706
Paper Subdivisions Analysis Report	1253
Attachment A Marine Activities Background Report	114
Attachment B Rural Waterways Background Report	152
Attachment C Transport Background Report	158
Attachment D Mining and Energy Background Report	96
Attachment E Land Based Conservation Background Report	127
Attachment F Agriculture and Rural Industries Background Report	136
Attachment G Tourism Background Report	158
Attachment H Housing and Accommodation Background Report	186
Attachment I E4 Environmental Living Zone Snapshot	444
Attachment J RU4 Primary Production Small Lots Zone Snapshot	214
Communication and Consultation Strategy	104
Rural Strategy Fact sheet	125
Paper subdivisions Fact sheet	241
Rural landscape zone Fact sheet	111
Environmental living zone Fact sheet	104
Large lot residential zone Fact sheet	72
Village zone Fact sheet	55
Water security and aquifers Fact sheet	55
Know your infrastructure zone Fact sheet	50
Looking after our environment Fact sheet	50
Tourism and visitor accommodation Fact sheet	49
Know your recreation zone Fact sheet	42
Looking after our waterways Fact sheet	36





Appendix E: Phone and email enquiries based on location

The following table provides a breakdown of locations, as reported in the Individual information sessions - Phone, zoom, in-person.

Location	Number of phone and email enquiries
Nabiac	13
Wang Wauk	2
Minimbah	10
Failford	1
Coolongolook	8
Wootton	6
Krambach	3
Belbora	2
Bundook	3
Dyers Crossing	2
Wallanbah	1
Wingham	13
Mount George	4
Wherrol Flat	3
Killabakh	2
Mooral Creek	1
Pacific Palms	3
Coomba Park	3
Smiths Lake	3
Tarbuck Bay	1
Bungwahl	10
Seal Rocks	1
Cooperbrook	4
Lansdowne	2
Upper Lansdowne	2

Location	Number of phone and email enquiries
Hannamvale	3
Coralville	4



ENGAGEMENT OUTCOMES REPORT

Gloucester	8
Tugrabakh	2
Belbora	1
Bindera	1
Craven	1
Dewitt	1
Forster	7
Tuncurry	2
Darawank	3
Taree	3
Cundletown	1
Cedar Party	1
Kundle	1
Glenthorne	5
Old Bar	4
Mitchells Island	2
Wallabi Point	2
Koorainghat	1
Pampoolah	1
Hallidays Point	2
Black Head	1
Rainbow Flat	4
Possum Brush	1
Red Head	1
Bulahdelah	5
Markwell	1
Upper Myall	1

Location	Number of phone and email enquiries
Crawford River	1
Myall	0
Nerong	1
Tea Gardens	4



ENGAGEMENT OUTCOMES REPORT

Fame Cove	2
Harrington	2
Booral	1
Limeburners Creek	1





MIDCOAST
council

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