



MIDCOAST
council



**MANNING
RIVER
ESTUARY &
CATCHMENT**



STAKEHOLDER CONSULTATION REPORT 2021

Annexure B

Acknowledgement of country

We acknowledge the traditional custodians of the land on which we work and live, the Gathang-speaking people and pay our respects to all Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people who now reside in the MidCoast Council area. We extend our respect to elders past and present, and to all future cultural-knowledge holders.

Prepared by

Natural Systems Team
MidCoast Council
Yalwany Ganya
2 Biripi Way
Taree NSW
Australia

Web: www.midcoast.nsw.gov.au/ourmanningriver

Tel: +61 2 79557777

Email: environment@midcoast.nsw.gov.au

Thank you

MidCoast Council has prepared this document with financial assistance from the NSW Government through its Coastal and Estuary Grants Program. This document does not necessarily represent the opinions of the NSW Government or the Department of Planning, Industry and Environment.

Thank you to the many stakeholders who assisted Council to prepare this program.

Contents

1. Introduction	1
2. Who did we consult?	4
3. How did we consult?	7
4. What did our community tell us?	8
Community Values	8
The ECMP Reference Group.....	11
Farmer consultation.....	13
Biripi consultation	13
Public submissions	18
5. Conclusion	20
Attachment 1: Consultation records	21
The Manning River ECMP Reference Group	21
The ECMP Technical Advisory Group	29
Delivery Partners	31
Issue Analysis Discussion Groups	33
Management Options – Refinement and Acceptability.....	35
Community and Industry groups	41



Photo: Our River – Our Future by Mark Gutterson, winner, Manning River Photography Prize

1. Introduction

This document provides a record of community and stakeholder consultation undertaken during the preparation of the Manning River Estuary and catchment management Program (ECMP). Consultation commenced in 2018 with awareness raising and continued throughout program development, reaching a conclusion during the public exhibition of the draft Manning River ECMP in June 2021.

Council was committed to engaging with our community and stakeholders to ensure the CMP is inclusive, captures local knowledge, reflects aspirations and concerns, and is supported by the community and stakeholders. This consultation is required for Coastal Management Programs prepared under the Coastal Management Act, which must demonstrate that the program actions are acceptable to stakeholders.

An overview of the stakeholder consultation program is shown in Figure 1 overleaf. Throughout the ECMP planning process, consultation from each stage was carried forward to inform the next stage of the program.

We used the Public Participation Spectrum (IAP2 2018) to assign participation levels for stakeholder and community engagement. The spectrum sets out the level of consultation for each target group from inform to consult, collaborate and empower, and our commitment to acknowledging and using community feedback. A diagram of the spectrum is provided in Figure 2.

In addition to the reports provided here, there are three more detailed consultation reports available as annexures to the Manning River ECMP, which are on the Our Manning River web page at www.midcoast.nsw.gov.au/ourmanningriver.

Find out more:

- Annexure C: Birrbay Voices: Aboriginal Consultation Report (PTLALC 2021)
- Annexure D: The Manning River ECMP Farmers Consultation (NBA Consulting 2019)
- Annexure E: The Manning River Estuary CMP Community Values Report (MCC 2020)

Figure 1: Overview of consultation

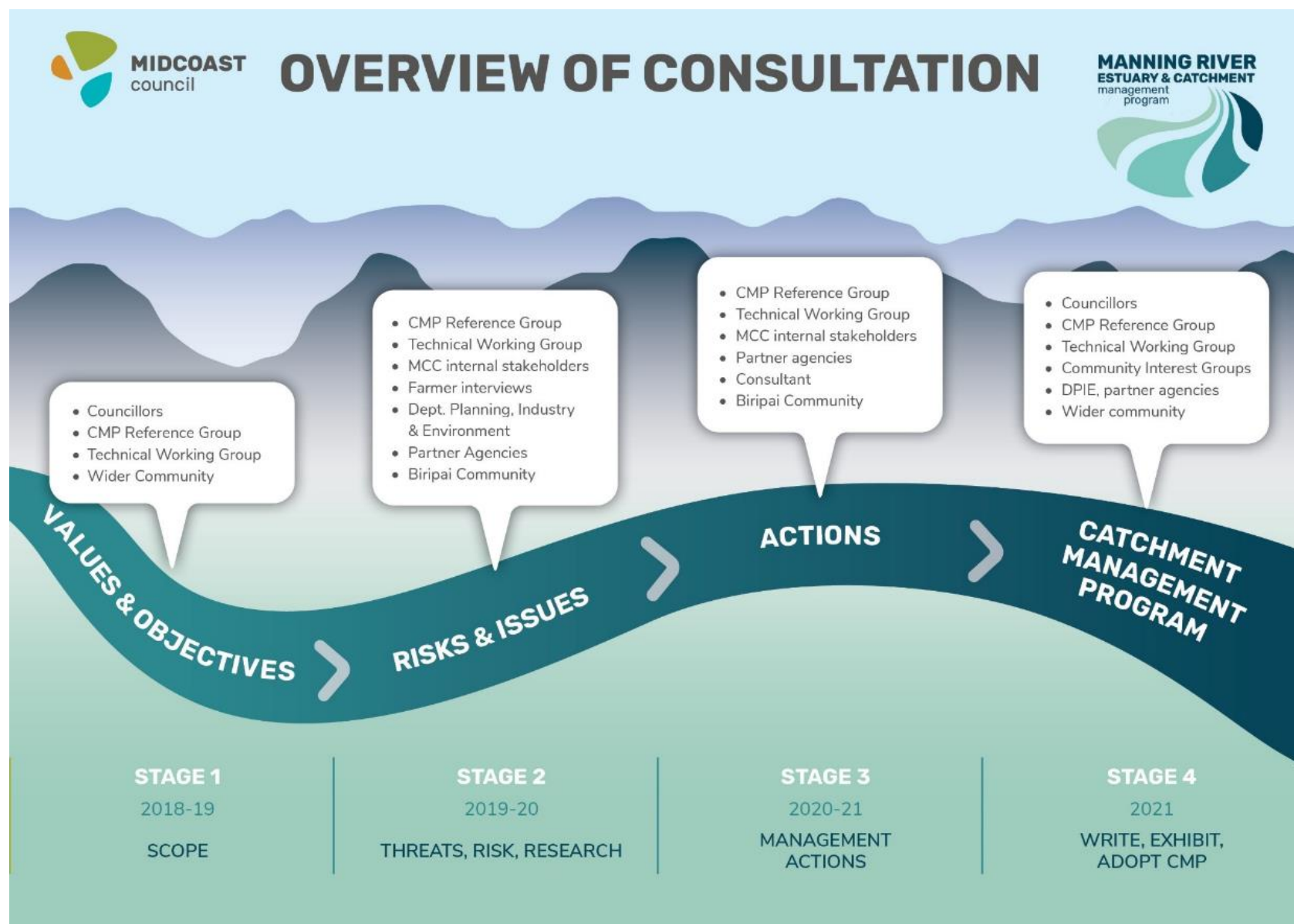
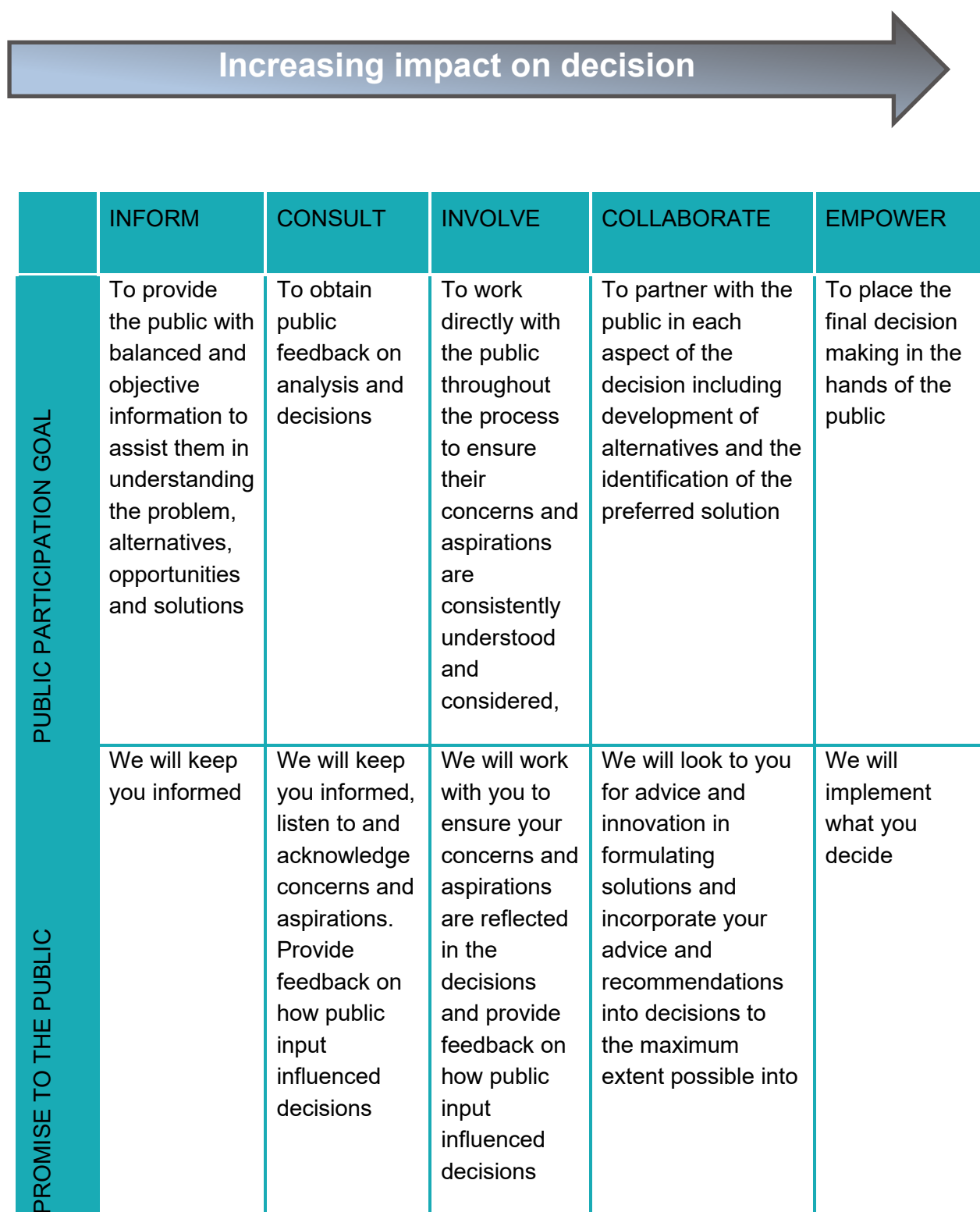


Figure 2: The Public Participation Spectrum



(Reference: International Association of Public Participation Australasia 2018)

2. Who did we consult?

The period during which the Manning River ECMP was developed proved a challenging time for community consultation, with a record-breaking drought, extensive bushfires, the COVID-19 pandemic and a 1-in-100 year flood all taking a toll in the region. We therefore depended primarily on stakeholder groups, with wider public engagement limited to a participatory values consultation in 2019 and the exhibition period in 2021. Stakeholder groups consulted included:

The Manning River ECMP Reference Group: a formally appointed committee of Council with 15 members made up of 10 community representatives, 4 government agency representatives and the CEO of the Purfleet-Taree Local Aboriginal Land Council (LALC). Community members were recruited via an advertising campaign to represent beef, dairy and oyster farmers, Landcare, Coastcare, recreational fishing and broad community interests. Agencies represented include:

- Hunter Local Land Services (LLS)
- Department of Planning, Industry and Environment (DPIE)– Water, Floodplains and Coast team
- DPIE – National Parks and Wildlife Service
- Transport for NSW – Maritime

Five meetings were held from December 2019 to July 2021.

The level of IAP2 participation with the Manning River ECMP Reference Group was involvement.

The ECMP Technical Advisory Group: an informal group with meetings held as needed. Members represent a range of Council teams, government agencies and academic institutions. The Technical Advisory Group held four meetings from November 2018 to May 2020. Members also participated in workshops held for issue analysis and development of management options.

The IAP2 level of participation was collaboration.

Delivery Partners: Within Council there are many teams with programs aligned to the objectives of the Manning River ECMP. Hunter Local Land Services (LLS) is a major partner in the program, along with other State government agencies, industry groups and non-government organisations such as Mid Coast 2 Tops Landcare.

In July-August 2020, we held a series of 12 discussion groups for delivery partners to analyse issues developed for the CMP. These discussion groups considered existing

management practices, what's working and what's not, opportunities and management options.

In February-March 2021 a further 9 workshop sessions were held to firm up management actions and convert them to S.M.A.R.T format (Specific, Measurable, Attainable, Realistic, Time bound).

The IAP2 level of participation was involvement and collaboration.

Aboriginal Consultation: the Purfleet-Taree Local Aboriginal Land Council (LALC) was engaged to consult with the Biripi community. The consultation project was led by LALC CEO Joedie Lawler. A survey instrument was used as a starting point and input was gained via three workshops and a series of one-on-one interviews. In total 48 people were surveyed across the catchment area, including members of the PTLALC and its Board, the Taree Indigenous Development and Employment (TIDE), local members of the Aboriginal Education Consultative Committee, an Aboriginal commercial fishing family and other Biripi community representatives.

The Gathang word for Biripi is Birrbay. Birrbay Voices: Aboriginal Consultation Report (PTLALC 2021 - Annexure C) is available on Council's web site.

Other Aboriginal representatives consulted were Council's Aboriginal Community Development Officers, the Manning Aboriginal Community Working Party, Taree Indigenous Development and Employment (TIDE) and the Hunter LLS Senior Aboriginal Liaison Officer.

The IAP2 level of participation was consultation and involvement.

Community and industry groups: Consultation with community groups was primarily via the membership of our CMP Reference Group, who represented a range of groups as shown below:

- Mid-Coast Dairy Advancement Group
- MidCoast Young Dairy Network
- North Oxley Island Drainage Union
- MCC Floodplain Committee
- Taree West Fishing Club
- Manning River Oyster Farmers Association
- MidCoast-to-Tops Landcare
- Manning Coastcare

Other community and industry interest groups consulted directly during the planning process included the Women in Dairy Group, the Manning River Turtle Conservation Group, Friends of Browns Creek, Gloucester Environment Group and NSW Farmers association.

The IAP2 level of participation was consultation.

Farmers: Nick Bullock from NBA Consulting was engaged to consult farmers about the barriers and drivers for catchment management practices, and how Council and other agencies can support and incentivise farmers to adopt best practice. Face-to-face and phone interviews were conducted with 24 Manning River catchment beef and dairy cattle farmers. Responses were analysed for common themes. Two workshops were held, one with the farmers' group "Women in Dairy" and the second with MCC, Hunter Local Land Services and Landcare personnel. The Manning River ECMP Farmers Consultation Report (NBA Consulting 2019 - Annexure D) presents the themes, provides analysis of the responses against a literature review, and concludes with recommendations for targeted programming of MCC resources.

The IAP2 level of participation was consultation.

Public consultation: In 2018, Council's catchment officers commenced awareness-raising activities by speaking and running stalls at a range of community events throughout the catchment.

Between 29 August and 11 December 2019, the CMP project team hosted a participatory public consultation on the theme of community values, nine consultation events were held from the top to the bottom of the catchment, attracting 251 participants. The Manning Community Values Report (MCC 2019 - Annexure E) provides a record of this consultation and is available on the Our Manning River web page.

A final public consultation was hosted during the exhibition phase of the ECMP, from 3 June 2021 – 13 July 2021. All submissions and comments were summarised in the final document.

The IAP2 level of participation was consultation.

3. How did we consult?

In 2018, Council's catchment officers commenced awareness-raising activities by running educational stalls at a range of community events throughout the catchment.

Between 29 August and 11 December 2019, the CMP project team hosted a participatory public consultation on the theme of community values. Nine consultation events were held from the top to the bottom of the catchment, attracting 251 participants.

Throughout the planning process, a range of consultation methods were used to reflect the diversity of needs, knowledge and experiences across the different stakeholder groups. Consultation methods used included:

- Interactive community workshops, pop-up workshops
- Community values mapping
- Photography competition
- Catchment education at market stalls using the Catchment Model
- Online surveys
- Discussion groups and focus groups
- Facilitated stakeholder workshops
- Online information hub haveyoursay.midcoast.nsw.gov.au/our-manning-river
- Public exhibition community information sessions (Taree, Gloucester and Wingham)
- Call for submissions

The draft Manning River ECMP and Annexures were presented to Council on 2 June 2021 and placed on public exhibition for 6 weeks commencing 3 June 2021 to seek community feedback in addition to that already obtained through an extensive engagement process to support development of the plan. The documents were made available on Council's website and a video was produced in-house to promote the exhibition of the documents and Council's commitment to looking after the river and estuary we love. Three drop-in consultation sessions were held in Taree, Wingham and Gloucester.



4. What our community told us

This section provides a brief overview of key themes and headlines across all community consultations, which were used to inform the Manning River ECMP.

Community Values

In the values survey completed by 122 participants, the three top values identified were:

- Healthy aquatic ecosystems
- Visual amenity
- Cultural and spiritual value.

Analysis of responses at our community workshops found the following key themes:

Environmental Values: “water is life”

- River Health: healthy aquatic and riparian ecosystems and good water quality underpin all other uses
- Plants and wildlife – biodiverse habitats for the full suite of flora and fauna communities.

“Water is life... we share the river as a central part of the wild ecosystem that provides habitat for us and all wildlife from iconic animals to tiniest microbes.”

Social Values: “it’s my happy place”

- Sensory experiences: connecting to nature in wild spaces
- Sanctuary and peace
- Stories and history –cultural connections to the river and estuary for the Aboriginal community and settlers across multiple generations
- Great Outdoors – recreational use for fun, fitness and well-being.

“Connecting to nature and myself, watching and experiencing animal and plant life, amazing sunsets, moon-rises and skies!”

Economic Values: “the river provides”

- Livelihoods: The Manning is a “working river” supporting primary production – oysters, dairy and beef.

“There’s a deep sense of history – childhood days, parents, grandparents, great grandparents who have farmed this land, lived, worked and relaxed along the river.”

Values Map

When participants were invited to participate in a value mapping exercise, by far the most frequently selected areas were the estuary and the coast. This matches with the higher population density in the estuary. On the other hand, there were no significant differences between values selected for the upper catchment and values for the estuary and coast. People swim and enjoy boating (including kayaking) throughout the catchment. They value the riffles and pools of the headwaters and the sheer immensity of the estuary. Figure 3 overleaf shows the values map for the Manning River catchment.

Community values for our waterways guide the water quality standards we need to meet to support those values. The values map developed for the ECMP builds on earlier work by the NSW Office of Environment and Heritage (OEH), which established the NSW Water Quality Objectives. These are the agreed environmental values and long-term goals for NSW's surface waters. They set out:

- the community's values and uses for our rivers, creeks, estuaries and lakes (ie healthy aquatic life, water suitable for recreational activities like swimming and boating, and drinking water); and
- a range of water quality indicators to help us assess whether the current condition of our waterways supports those values and uses.

Water Quality Objectives set for Fresh and Estuarine surface waters have been used in the Monitoring and Evaluation program for the Manning River ECMP. The full value consultation report 'Annexure E: The Manning River Estuary CMP Community Values Report (MCC 2020)' is available on the Our Manning River web page at www.midcoast.nsw.gov.au/ourmanningriver.

You can see the original values map at <https://www.environment.nsw.gov.au/ieo/Manning/caag.htm>

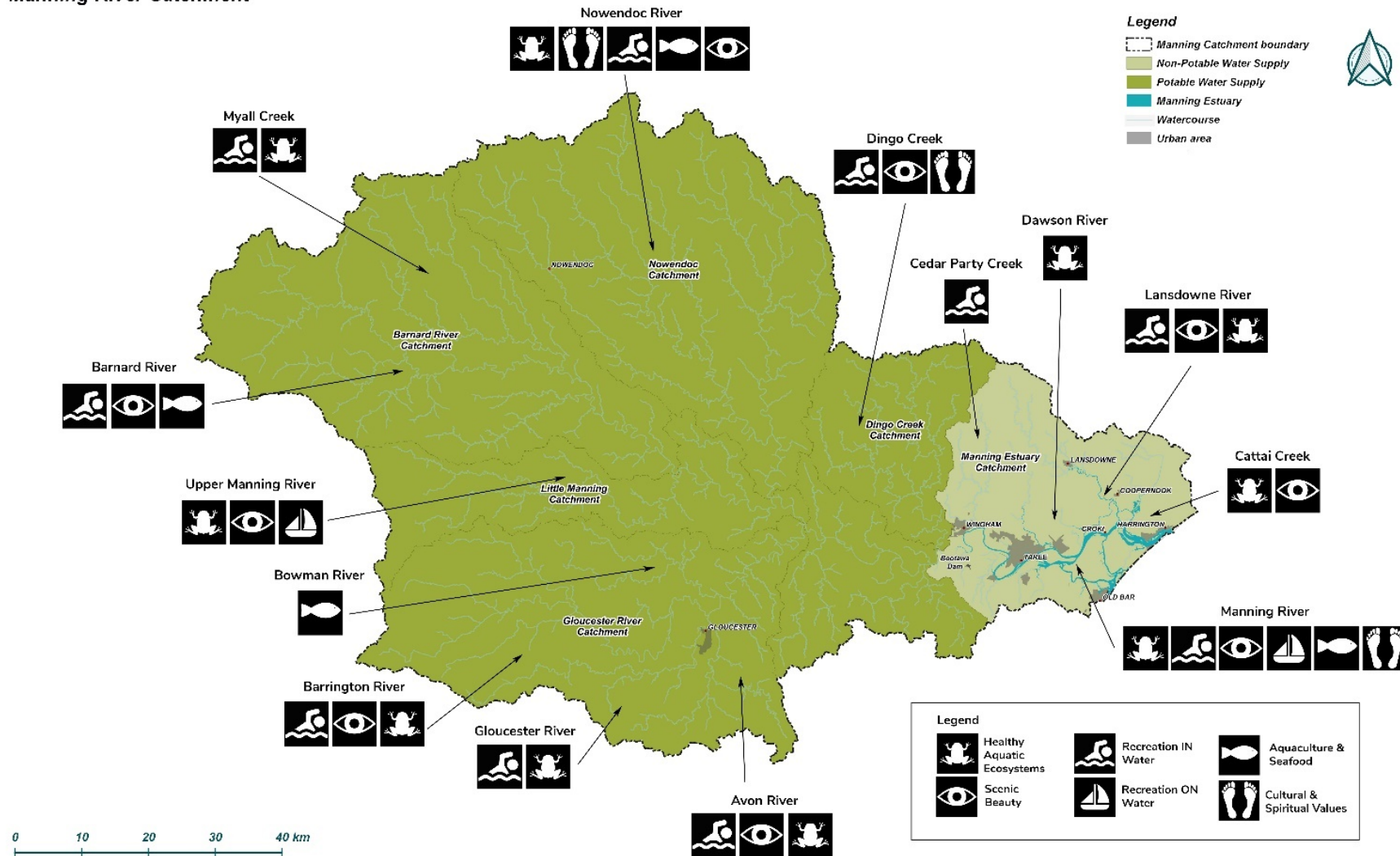
An updated version is currently in production by the NSW Government and will be available later in 2021.



Photo: participants at a values workshop, Manning Regional Art Gallery

Figure 3 Values our community ascribed to each subcatchment

Manning River Catchment



The ECMP Reference Group

In addition to our regular meetings recorded in Attachment 1, our project team conducted one-on-one interviews with the community representatives on the Manning River ECMP Reference group. Topics discussed included vision, issues, opportunities and management options. An overview of key themes is provided below.

Environmental Vision

- Ecosystem health: “A river in which intact and effective ecological processes are maintained, with the physical characteristics of a river in good condition, clothed in a healthy riparian strip.”
- Resilience: “We maintain function, adapt and respond to a changing climate.”
- Manage holistically: “The catchment will be cared for and managed as a whole.”
- A wild river: “The wild character of the river is preserved.”
- Clean water: “We maintain clean water, which the rest of life flows from.”

Social/cultural vision

- The river is life: “The river is the lifeblood of our community – we drink from it, eat fish, use it for recreation. The river serves us, and we serve it.”
- Recreation and wellbeing: “We value the river’s aesthetics and social attributes. The community enjoys, appreciates and experiences the river and the environments around it.”
- Sustainable use, decision-making and management: “Continue to protect what we have and use it sustainably.”
- Awareness, appreciation and understanding: “It’s the responsibility of everyone to respect and understand our iconic river system...to appreciate it, utilise it, and do their bit to keep it clean.”
- Partnerships, working together: All stakeholders need to work together so we can benefit from the river for business and leisure.

Economic Vision

- Manage sustainably for economic benefit: “A healthy system that everyone can benefit from for their business and recreation.”
- Oysters: “Great estuary = great oyster industry.”
- Farming: “The river is very important to the farming community.”

- Tourism-recreation: “Fishing, tourism and lifestyle are extremely important to the economy of the area.”

Managing Hazards

- Be proactive and prepared: “Evidence-based science helps us understand, plan and prepare for hazards.”
- Climate Change: “Climate Change is happening – we need to be proactive and make decisions and changes to minimise the impact of hazards.”

Key Issues

Issues identified by the Reference Group were closely aligned with issues identified through the Threat and Risk Assessment. They included

- Education and stewardship
- Sediment and Erosion control
- Loss of riparian vegetation and coastal wetlands including seagrass
- Acid sulfate soil (ASS) discharge
- Agricultural impacts – soil degradation, irrigation, run-off
- Pathogens from sewerage, OSSMs and animal effluent
- Climate Change: extreme events, sea level rise, coastal inundation.
- Weed control
- Stormwater including litter and plastics



Photo: members of the Manning River ECMP Reference Group and Council's ECMP project team

The Technical Advisory Group

This group provided oversight and expert advice throughout the project. A full record is provided in Attachment 1. Key areas of input included:

- Review of all moderate to high-tier risks identified through Marine Estate Management Strategy's Threat and Risk Assessment framework;
- Identification of critical knowledge gaps and selection of research projects for Stage 2 in the ECMP process.
- Review of the Scoping Study in response to DPIE feedback
- Advice on design of stage 2 research projects including:
 - Coastal Wetlands and Littoral Rainforest Mapping
 - The social science project consulting farmers
 - Calibration of the Estuary Health Risk Model
- Amendment of Event Mean Concentrations used in the spatial risk assessment, to better account for variations in diffuse source run off from different types of land use.
- Input into issue analysis and refinement of management options
- Input into the Monitoring, Evaluation, Reporting and Improvement Program

Delivery partners

Delivery partners within Council and in partner agencies with both lead and supporting roles were consulted throughout the process. Key representatives and knowledge holders were invited to attend the Issue Analysis discussion groups and Management Options workshops.

Ultimately all Management Actions that proceeded into the draft Manning River ECMP were reviewed by delivery partners, lead agencies and supporting agencies. A full record of the final round of consultations is provided in Appendix 1.

Management Actions were either agreed to in the format presented, amended to reflect input and advice from stakeholders, or in some cases removed from the final Program if agreement could not be reached. It is therefore deemed that all Management Actions presented in the Manning River ECMP are acceptable and have the support of stakeholders, as required by the Coastal Management Act.

Biripi consultation

Aboriginal people refer to their tribal area's as "Country". According to the Birrbay Voices report:

"Country is important for identity. It is important for culture, cultural practices and our own healing.

Building strong partnerships to share knowledge and care for Country will assist in healing our people."

Joedie Lawler, CEO of the Purfleet-Taree Aboriginal Land Council explains the connection of the Biripi people to the river:

Birrbaygal Biripi People are known as the guyiwan, the shark people. We are connected to Water through our tribal totem. Water is the life source of all country and all living things. As garuwagal bathuGal (Saltwater Freshwater people) we maintain our healing from the water. It connects us to culture, our LORE and our land Birrbay Barray (Biripi country).

As Birrbaygul we follow the Matriarch LORE our mother's bloodline. We descend under Mirakeet or winmara worima the coastal and the mountain clans. Each Family group have bloodline totems that they are responsible to protect. We are connected to this totem by blood. Our responsibility is the conservation of these species. Some are water totems others land and some air i.e. Fish animals or birds

Djarri Bila (the Manning river) and the estuaries provide us with food and medicine it is important for our people to always maintain a connection and responsibility for the health of the entire system from the mountains to the sea. To ensure we follow LORE and the signs of mother earth through the seasons, taking only what we need to protect the longevity of all living things. For generations our people have been engaged in the river through fishing, swimming and the knowledge of those places along the river with special meaning. It is important for us to maintain spiritual and close connection to the water. we describe our country as where the leaves touch the water from the mountains to the sea.

The full report is provided in Annexure C to the Manning River ECMP available on Council's web page.



Photo: Aboriginal families love playing in the river

Recommendations from the Biripi consultation have informed the ECMP management actions. These are the key messages from the consultation:

Access: “The river system is important to Birrbay people. Our country is bound by where the leaves touch the water from the mountains to the see.

Concerns: “We used all the river in the old days. There were agreements with the local farmers to access through their property. Now there’s limited access to area’s that have been used for generations due to private ownership.”

Ecosystem health and cultural resources: “Medicine and food for our people and ceremonies depend on the health of the river system”

Concerns: degradation of cultural food resources including prawns, cobra worm, fish and shellfish; bag limits and restrictions on use of pipis.

Water quality and testing: “If our river dies our culture dies. Our connection to Country, to the water of the river and the salt of the sea is important to who we are.”

Concerns: monitoring, regulation and compliance for pollution events including contamination of sediments.

Natural flow of River: “Keeping it flowing and healthy is important to all of us both black and white.”

Concerns: impacts on the natural flow of the river through farming and mining.

Continued engagement: “Include Aboriginal people in the process from start to finish, not as an afterthought.”

Concerns: lack of engagement, leading to lack of trust. “It is important and our responsibility for our children to have a clear connection to country, to know who they are as Birrbay people and to understand their responsibility to care for country.”



Photo: Brett Dolson

Community and Industry Groups

Key matters raised during the community and industry group consultations included:

- Concern regarding over extraction and illegal extraction during the 2019 drought
- The importance of working from the ground up in partnership with landholders when promoting stewardship and building skills for best management practice.
- The former Rivercare model was raised numerous times as a valuable model. This is a sub-catchment approach to working with local communities in river management issues.
- Need to build community networks, educate new landholders about their responsibilities and build capacity for good land management.
- Promote community resilience to drought, fire and flood.
- Value of sustainable farming groups.
- Groups consulted expressed their willingness to partner with Council and other lead agencies to implement the program.

Issues identified matched against those raised by the Manning River ECMP Reference Group, such as climate change impacts, biodiversity loss, agricultural impacts on riparian vegetation and bank erosion.



Photo: Consultation with the Manning River Turtle Conservation Group

Farmer consultation

A social science research project was conducted in 2019 to understand drivers and barriers to the uptake of environmental best management practices in the farming community.

Farmers told us that actions for waterway protection must also have advantages for farm management and productivity. Win-win solutions are more likely to be adopted. Motivators for change will need to resonate with the goals of individual farmers, recognising that goals differ depending on the life stage, values and aspirations of the farmer, the position of the farm within the catchment, their individual and industry specific husbandry practices and their own resource management. To be effective, a proposed solution must address the identified problem without creating another set of problems. The ongoing maintenance costs to the landholders must be factored into project design.

Farmers support a holistic approach to protecting waterways and improving water quality. The preferred mix of practices would include improving soil health organics; promoting good pasture cover; rotational grazing; and providing shade, water and stock attractants away from waterways along with the more traditional stock exclusion fencing of riparian areas. (Bullock 2019).



Photo: Dairy farmer Sam Nicholson is a member of the Manning River ECMP Reference Group

Public submissions

During the public exhibition, a total of 25 submissions were received from members of the MidCoast community and several community groups, with 19 expressing broad support for Council's approach.

The exhibited Manning River ECMP has been amended to reflect this feedback. The major themes for submissions are discussed below.

Letters of agreement were received from five public agencies nominated as action leads or stakeholders: Transport for NSW, Hunter Local Land Services and the Biodiversity Conservation Trust and Crown Lands (committed) and the NSW National Parks and Wildlife Service. Each of the lead and supporting agency submissions offered "in principle support" during the public exhibition of the document.

Letters of support from community interest groups

Four community interest groups provided submissions, each of which offered broad support for the program and/or the consultation process as shown below.

- Manning River Action Group (President John Caldon): "In broad terms we congratulate the Council on the propose program."
- Mid Coast 2 Tops Landcare (President Robyn Lamond): "We have welcomed consultation on the development of this estuary and catchment program for the Manning River ... Landcare looks forward to working with Council, to engage with land managers and the community on strategies to support a healthy river system in the Manning Valley."
- Friends of Browns Creek (President Bill Dennis): "The work you have done is commendable ...you and your team deserve to be congratulated."
- Gloucester Environment Group (President John Watts): "GEG supports the Council's efforts to introduce a comprehensive Program to both protect and enhance what the ECMP describes as the lifeblood of our community."

Letters of support from individuals

Of the remaining 17 submissions from individuals, 7 wrote in support of the submission from Manning River Action Group. Submissions from other individuals not aligned to this group offered support on matters including the evidence-based approach, engagement with community representatives and the whole-of-catchment approach.

Entrance modifications

In addition to the TfNSW submission mentioned above, three community submissions commented on the modifications proposed to create a permanent opening for the north entrance. Of these, one was submitted by Manning River Action Group and endorsed by seven additional letters of support.

A further two individuals commented on this issue, one expressing concern regarding potential impacts on shorebirds and marine biodiversity, and the other calling for scientific investigation into the potential environmental impacts of such infrastructure before any decision are made.

The Manning River Action Group has campaigned for many years to provide a permanent safe and navigable entrance to the Manning River, attracting significant support. They commend establishment of the NSW government's Manning River Taskforce which is investigating options to improve safety and navigability of the Manning River entrance.

The submission received from the Manning River Action Group expresses "very serious concern" regarding Manning River ECMP Section 6.9 Issue Snapshot - Entrance Modifications. The group is concerned that the potential risks of entrance modification as outlined in section 6.9 "may well suggest to the NSW Government that the council is no longer supportive of the Taskforce."

Irrigation, extraction and drought

Three submissions raised concerns about irrigation and water extraction.

One submission proposed increasing allowances for domestic water harvesting and allowing water licenses to be traded. Two submissions raised concerns about the significant impact of water extraction exacerbating low flows during the drought, impacting on biodiversity and ecosystem health.

Stormwater pollution

Two submissions expressed concern about stormwater pollution. Friends of Browns Creek have worked for many years to improve the water quality, ecosystem health and the public amenity of Browns Creek. Their submission noted concern that Browns Creek contributes significant pollution to the Estuary, as evidenced during the recent flood event. They call for reinstatement of water quality monitoring in the creek and mention the need to carefully manage future development and maintain Gross Pollutant Traps.

A second submission expressed concern about the state of Wingham Wetlands, which was constructed to reduce stormwater pollution and requires refurbishment. Maintenance of Gross Pollutant Traps and refurbishment of Wingham Wetlands are addressed in Actions 2.07, with budgets allocated through the Stormwater Levy.

Erosion and Sediment Control

Two submissions discuss Action 2.10, which involves a study to prioritise estuarine riverbank areas and subsequent stabilisation works.

Transport for NSW – maritime welcomes independent, site specific and evidence-based studies of bank erosion and notes that funds will need to be confirmed for any actions arising from the study.

The second submission from a recreational fisherman draws attention to the use of fallen timber for bank revetment as an alternative to rock, noting the benefits to fish habitat of this method.

The draft ECMP was updated to reflect community and stakeholder feedback provided in the submissions.

5. Conclusion

Throughout the planning process Council was committed to listening to our community so that the Manning River ECMP reflected local knowledge, concerns and aspirations. In all aspects where practical Council worked together with community and stakeholders to find solutions. Throughout the ECMP planning process, consultation from each stage was carried forward to inform the next stage of the program.

The level of input we received throughout these consultations has ensured that the actions presented in the ECMP are acceptable to the community and stakeholders. Given this acceptability we commence implementation of the program with support and backing of our community and stakeholders.

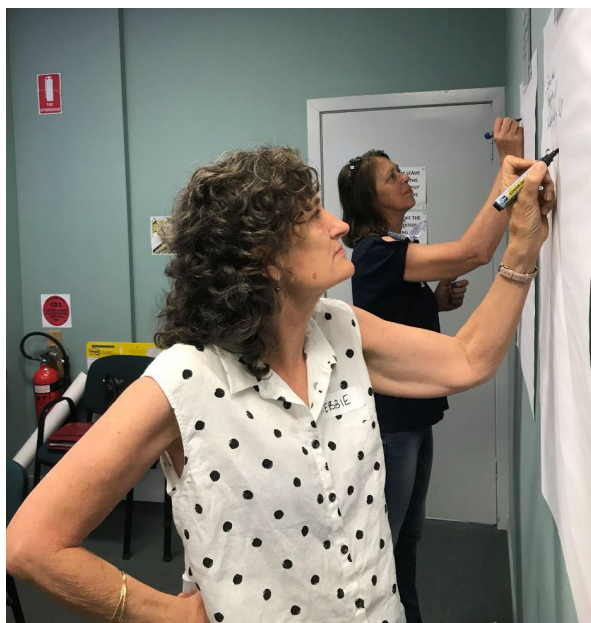


Photo: A workshop activity with Women in Dairy members

Appendix 1: Consultation records

This section provides a more detailed record of the consultations held to inform development of the Manning River Estuary and Catchment Management Program.

The Manning River ECMP Reference Group

The ECMP Reference Group was established on 11/12/2019 and is co-chaired by Councillors Len Roberts and Katheryn Smith. To date there have been four meetings with minutes presented to Council for adoption.

Reference Group Meeting – Values - 11/12/2019

This meeting included a **values workshop** using a range of facilitation techniques. The results are shown below.

Q1: What do you love most about the Manning Catchment?

Theme 1: Scenic beauty: The beauty of the landscapes; Scenic beauty

Theme 2: wildlife and ecosystems: It's home to so much wildlife; Habitat for migratory waders and shorebirds; platypus; dolphins and those low-flying bombers – pelicans! Diversity of habitat; Wetlands

Theme 3: Livelihoods: The river provides a living; harvesting high quality oysters.

Theme 4: Recreation: Messing about in boats; Recreational opportunities; My happy place – water and boats; boating, fishing, fun

Theme 5: spiritual/cultural connection: Blood of the earth / joy for us; Quiet corners and places; the quality of life it sustains; wild spaces; lifeblood of the community.

Q2: What is it important to protect?

Theme 1: Ecosystem Health

- Whole systems; Our ecosystems; Riparian areas; The capacity of the soil and whole landscape to hold water
- All things living; Diverse habitat for the full suite of plant and animal species who live here; Threatened species; Wildlife corridors
- Rainforest; Littoral rainforest from salt scald, loss of canopy
- Flood plain ecological communities; Riverbanks – soils from erosion
- Birds – shore bird breeding protection, wetland preservation, marine mammals and turtles

Theme 2: Water Quality and flow

- Water quality for all uses; river flow; cleanliness;

- Water quality – for all outcomes, this needs bank protection, also stormwater, also Government courage to prosecute

Theme 3: Recreational access

Safe public access with minimal impact;

Theme 4: Livelihoods

- A viable and growing oyster industry

Theme 5: Coastal processes

- River entrances; Dunes from erosion; river mouth

Q3: What are your favourite places and why?

- Beach – water
- Saltwater Point NP, beaches, picnic areas –surf; feels like a part of nature
- Littoral rainforests – environment, fauna, peaceful
- Wingham Brush – natural beauty, recreation
- Pampoolah Reserve – recreational
- Farquhar Park – scenic beauty
- Whole southern entrance for its beauty and feeling of wildness
- Farquhar Inlet and Harrington Beach – great habitat for breeding shorebirds and migratory waders
- Old Bar Beach
- Manning Point for fishing, birds, wildlife and recreation
- Manning Estuary – dolphins!
- Upper catchment forests
- Mid Catchment – kayak, fishing, wildlife

Reference Group Meeting – Issues - 12/02/2020

Councillor Roberts facilitated a group discussion covering issues across four key themes: vegetation management, diffuse-source run-off, climate change and user impacts. Key points and thoughts of participants are summarised below.

Facilitator: Louise Duff

Venue: Council Chambers, Taree

Attendees: Councillors Len Roberts and Katheryn Smith (Co-Chairs); Chris Scott – Manning Landcare; Sam Nicholson – MidCoast Dairy Advancement Group; Peter Longworth – Manning Delta Landholders Group (beef industry); Peter Bignell – representing beef and dairy industry; John Harris – Recreational fishing; Ian Crisp – Manning River Oyster Farmers' Association; Kirsty Hughes – community representative; Noel Piercy – community representative; Tony Wales - community representative; Neil Kelleher- NSW Department of Planning Industry and Environment ; Andre Uljee – Transport NSW; Geoff Le Messurier – Hunter Local Land Services

Vegetation

- Riparian management. Management issue for farmers, weed management, ongoing efforts, fencing types
- Areas of bank erosion are correlated with absence of riparian vegetation, high risk during extreme weather events. Boat wash - Not as big an issue
- Acknowledge complexity and expense of stock exclusion.
- Partner with landholders to identify solutions that suit farms. Partnerships, flexibility, and incentives are the best approach.
- Explore alternatives to rock filleting for bank protection.
- Promote Biodiversity Conservation Trust agreements with landholders
- Need to clarify jurisdiction over vegetation management in the foreshore area.
- Raise awareness of mangrove value and impacts to landholders
- Educate new landholders on natural assets and risks, legislation, regulations, management. Investigate welcome information packs.
- Facilitate peer to peer learning
- Improve enforcement and compliance, engage community in reporting

Runoff

- Agricultural runoff key issue for oyster farming. Faecal coliforms not all based on onsite sewerage management systems as previously assumed, more from cattle. Getting saltwater back into the estuary is the key from an oyster perspective.
- Drought and dry soil are creating more run-off, loss of water to property.
- Improved soil health = better productivity for farmers and better for health for catchment.
- Improving soil will enable landscape to absorb more runoff, improve resilience to drought and fire
- Prioritise programs to improve infiltration rates, ground cover, soil organics.
- Farmers will need to hold more water for stock in a changing climate.
- Reconsider 10% harvestable right for estuary properties. -More retention to cope with climate change impacts
- Understand and address the barriers and disincentives to landscape rehydration.

- Expect high peak flows in stormwater system under climate change scenarios, understand impacts.
- Explore more rainwater harvesting to reduce stormwater impacts
- Safeguard capacity of the sewerage system now, and in a changing climate.
- In urban areas, government has major control over runoff; while in rural areas its landholders.
- We need engagement from both government and the community to reduce run-off impacts.
- Ongoing long-term macro-invertebrate and fish-surveys could be valuable resource for monitoring ecosystem health. Methods available include Aus. Rivas and Sustainable Rivers audit. Could also cover veg, platypus.
- Consider adding biological monitoring to CMP, possibly with a citizen science component (e.g. Riverwatch).

Climate Change

- Regenerate farming important role
- Government has a role in both rural and urban environments
- Flow rates an issue
- Macro invertebrate populations are indicators to change, extreme events
- Soil water retention will help with climate change resilience; mitigate drought stress and reduce run-off in flood events.
- Improving soil organics captures carbon and increases productivity.
- Every scenario / case different – need a holistic approach
- Urban areas - stormwater main issue. We need practical solutions, water sensitive urban design.
- DPIE - River styles historical data could be useful.

User Impacts

- Bank loss due to high tides, floodwaters, riparian vegetation loss considered much more significant than boat wash. This may appear the case but undercut causes collapse during a flood. Boat wash a considerable factor in narrow waterways as documented in evidence from the Wallamba and Williams Rivers.
- WRL Studies – in large open waterways aligned to the dominant wind, wind waves are more significant risk factors for bank erosion.
- Narrow rivers more vulnerable to bank erosion than wide reaches.
- Need data on number of boats and trends. Manning boat use is seasonal and sporadic. Anecdotal evidence it is increasing.
- Dawson River - fully vegetated banks but banks being undercut. Identify people / activities that are the problem, develop solutions.
- Boat size, power and wake height are increasing.
- ID Zones
- Discussion on experience from Wallis Lake, where Council successfully worked with recreational users to introduce zoning.
- Consider planning now to manage use - identify appropriate zones; “place for everyone”

Reference Group Meeting – Acceptability of Management Options - 11/12/2019

At this meeting the full list of management options arising from the Issue Analysis discussion groups (see below) was presented. Amendments were recorded to inform the next iteration of actions to proceed into the evaluation process. There was broad acceptance and support for the Management Options.

Reference Group Meeting – Flood Debrief - 23/04/2021

This meeting focussed on a debrief after the 1-in-100 year flood of March 2021. There was general discussion on impacts and resilience. The meeting also received briefings on the Climate Change Issue Analysis for the ECMP, and next steps in the planning process.

One-on-one interviews

One-on-one survey interviews with each of the ten community representatives and one of the three Councillors were held in May 2020. An appointment time was scheduled with each participant, and the survey form with ten questions was provided to all participants in advance, allowing time to prepare. This method of consultation was used because the Covid-19 pandemic precluded face-to-face workshops.

This report presents a summary of results for each question. Management options identified here were carried forward into the next stage of the CMP process.

Environmental Vision key themes

Ecosystem health: “A river in which intact and effective ecological processes are maintained, with the physical characteristics of a river in good condition, clothed in a healthy riparian strip.”

Resilience: “We maintain function, adapt and respond to a changing climate.”

Manage holistically: “The catchment would be cared for and managed as a whole.”

Wild river: “The wild character of the river is preserved.”

Clean water: “Clean water, which the rest of life flows from.”

Social/cultural vision

The river is life: “The river is the lifeblood of our community – we drink from it, eat fish, use it for recreation. The river serves us, and we serve it.”

Recreation and wellbeing: “We value the river’s aesthetics and social attributes. The community enjoys, appreciates and experiences the river and the environments around it.”

Sustainable use, decision-making and management: “Continue to protect what we have and use it sustainably.”

Awareness, appreciation and understanding: “It’s the responsibility of everyone to respect and understand our iconic river system...to appreciate it, utilise it, and do their bit to keep it clean.”

Partnerships, working together: All stakeholders need to work together so we can benefit from the river for business and leisure.

Economic Vision

Manage sustainably for economic benefit: “A healthy system that everyone can benefit from for their business and recreation.”

Oysters: “Great estuary = great oyster industry.”

Farming: “The river is very important to the farming community.”

Tourism-recreation: “Fishing, tourism and lifestyle are extremely important to the economy of the area.”

Managing Hazards

Be proactive and prepared: Evidence-based science helps us understand, plan and prepare for hazards.

Climate Change: “Climate Change is happening – we need to be proactive and make decisions and changes to minimise the impact of hazards.” “We take action to mitigate and adapt to the impacts of climate change.”

Key Issues

- Sediment and Erosion control: keeping livestock off the river, restoring riverbank vegetation and stability, improve forestry practices, unsealed roads, river crossings
- Riparian vegetation: Improve the condition, extent and connectivity of riparian vegetation.
- ASS discharge – manage coastal wetlands, floodplain channels
- Flood management incl. opening Old Bar and maintaining floodplain drainage channels
- Agricultural impacts – soil degradation, irrigation, run-off and cattle impact on riparian zone
- Drought preparedness
- Education and stewardship
- Pathogens from STPs, sewerage overflow during storm events; un-sewered villages, animal effluent
- Climate Change – incl. extreme events, sea level rise, coastal inundation.
- Loss of coastal wetlands incl. seagrass
- Regulating recreational boating
- Cumulative loss of recreational access

- Weed control
- Fire management - Improve cross-tenure hazard reduction
- Stormwater including litter and plastics
- Sand accumulation at Farquhar
- Other: Loss of natural terrestrial habitat; impacts on fish stocks and food web

Opportunities - environment

Holistic catchment management: “We have the opportunity to manage almost the whole catchment within our LGA. It’s a challenge and opportunity: whole-of-catchment, holistic management.”

Engagement and education: “This is a people issue. A lot of people don’t get the impact of day-to-day decisions. Promote public education on the issues. Publicise issues affecting the river. Engage with landholders in the catchment. Improve decision-making.”

Regenerative farming/rehydrating the landscape/farming best practice: “*Soil-for-life* research shows improved profitability and wellbeing from regenerative farming.” “Provide credible regenerative farming advice, info on benefits and methods and where to get it.” “Promote small, positive changes to management practices.” “It’s farmers talking to farmers.”

Manage riparian vegetation/erosion: “the remaining native vegetation remnants are very important – improve and maintain them.”

Fauna conservation: “Manage to protect the native fauna – helmeted turtle, platypus in upper catchment, shorebirds and Little Terns in lower catchment.”

Science research/monitoring: “It’s cool to see there is a lot of research and data being collected. There’s opportunity to use scientific research and data to improve management.”

Other: “Farquhar entrance should be left natural.” “Supportive of further land acquisitions to continue restoration of Cattai Wetlands and Big Swamp.”

Opportunities – social/cultural/economic

Develop sustainable tourism: “Reorient the towns to face the river and take advantage of the views.” “Be entrepreneurial. Look at the Crown Lands caravan parks. Introduce glamping, ecotourism.” “Redesign the Harrington entrance into a playground for tourism and recreation boating with a permanent safe entrance and marina.”

Development and land-use planning: “We need good strong Council planning to manage development and maintain the integrity of the system.”

Strategically manage recreational access: “Re-establish community access to the river for recreation. Cumulative loss needs to be addressed strategically.” “The right mix of recreation facilities could spread use through the system.” “Recognise and promote the social and wellbeing aspects of natural habitat and experience.”

Recreational boating strategy: “NSW Maritime promotes all forms of waterway activity in line with community expectations but does not generally support the characterisation or zoning of the waterways that segregate different forms of boating activities.”

Expand oyster production within existing footprint: “Manning is one of only a handful of estuaries on the east coast with latent potential.”

Volunteer program: “Develop a more comprehensive volunteer Coastcare/ Landcare volunteer program co-ordinated by MCC to manage public areas.”

Aboriginal engagement: Involve the Aboriginal community in the consultation process and as partners in implementation. Reach out to the Aboriginal elders and their families. It’s their country and their story, first and foremost.

Management Options

Land management: “Provide incentives and support for farmers to protect and improve the riparian zone, especially high value areas.” “Fence cattle out and restore the riverbank from Wingham down.” “Promote more ground cover to control erosion.” “Continue to invest in riparian stabilisation and erosion control in the estuary: fencing of waterways, rock fillets and revetment.” “Use a bush regeneration approach to improve health of the riparian zone – control weeds while cultivating natives.”

Floodplain management and ASS: “Continue to improve management of floodgates with a well-designed system – minimum inverts, redesign drains.” “Retain, protect and restore coastal wetlands - capture more freshwater during rain events.” “Continue to purchase land and remediate known ASS hotspots e.g. Big Swamp, Cattai.”

Development Control and Land-use Planning: “Introduce better planning controls. The no-net run-off planning controls in Great Lakes should be rolled out across the LGA to protect water quality in urban areas.” “Use land-use planning to protect the alluvial river flats and arable land for farming and food production.”

Community engagement and education: “talk about, educate and inform people about ecosystem services, what the river gives to us and what we need to do to protect it.” “Work more with farmers, Landcare to promote a transition to regenerative farming.” “Run an outreach program with property visits.” “Educate new arrivals, targeting property buyers in high priority areas.” “The CMP team could join meetings at the fire sheds to discuss fixing estuary issues.” “Install interpretive signs at parks and boat ramps to build understanding so it’s in their mind while they are there – remind people they have a special responsibility to look after our waterways.”

Fire hazard reduction: “Work with other government departments – forestry, NPWS. We’re not having the smaller, cooler patch burns using the more traditional Indigenous approach. It’s an issue for the river because ash and carbon are washing into the river.”

Erosion from boatwash: “NSW Maritime when managing the environmental impact of boating activity including bank erosion requires evidence-based data to drive and implement management actions.”

The ECMP Technical Advisory Group

ECMP TAG Meeting 14/11/2018

Venue: MidCoast Council Forster

Attendees: Alisha Madsen: Catchment Officer - Manning Catchment, MCC; Brian Hughes: Estuary and Marine Officer, Hunter LLS; Debbi Delaney: Catchment Co-ordinator, MCC; Geoff Le Messurier: Senior Local Land Services Officer, NRM Extension and Advisory, Hunter LLS; Georgie Dawson: Environmental Technician, Estuaries and Catchment Science, OEH; Gerard Tuckerman: Manager Natural Systems, MCC; Dr. Graeme Watkins: Manager, Water Management and Treatment, Water Services, MCC; Dr. Jamie Ruprecht: PhD Candidate, Water Research Laboratory, School of Civil & Environmental Engineering, UNSW; Dr. Joselyn Dela-Cruz: Principal Scientist, Water Wetlands & Coast Science Branch, NSW OEH; Dr. Karen Bettink: Catchment Officer - Ecosystem Management, MCC; Mathew Bell: Senior Ecologist, MCC; Neil Kelleher: Senior Natural Resource Officer, Water Floodplain and Coast, Hunter Central Coast Branch, Conservation and Regional Delivery Division, OEH; Dr. Peter Scanes: Senior Team Leader, Estuaries and Catchment Science, OEH; Prudence Tucker: Water Quality and Estuary Management Program Co-ordinator, MCC; Tanya Cross: Sustainability and Natural Assets Co-ordinator, MCC; Dr. Will Glamore: Associate Professor and Principal Research Fellow, Water Research Laboratory, School of Civil & Environmental Engineering, UNSW

Outcomes: A gap analysis was undertaken to help identify and prioritise studies proposed for Stage Two in the CMP process. The first stage of the gap analysis involved an extensive literature search and review. The second stage of the gap analysis involved assessing these knowledge gaps for the Marine Estate to the Manning River estuary under categories of threats listed under the Regional Threat and Risk Assessment (TARA) using the MCC corporate Risk Assessment template (2017).

In the third stage, all moderate to high-tier risks identified through MCC and the TARA framework were reviewed at a workshop involving the Technical Working Group and other key agency representatives to develop threat-based rankings. Risk rankings considered both ecological and socio-economic values of the Manning River estuary. The outcomes of this process are provided in Table 9 of Annexure A: Manning River ECMP Scoping Study.

ECMP TAG Meeting 23/07/2019

Venue: MidCoast Council Forster

Attendees: Gerard Tuckerman (MCC), Louise Duff (MCC), Prue Tucker (MCC), Dr. Karen Bettink (MCC), Alisha Madsen (MCC), Neil Kelleher (DPIE - EES), Dr. Peter Scanes (EES), Dr. Rebecca Swanson (EES), Anita Kovac (EES) Scott Carter (DPIE-Fisheries), Josh Chivers (NPWS), Lisa Andersons (MCC Water), Dr. Peter Serov (Consultant: Ground Truthing), Brian Hughes (LLS), Nick Bullock (Consultant: Social Science),

At this meeting members of the TAG received briefings and provided preliminary input into project design for several Stage 2 research studies. These included:

- The Values consultation
- The social science project consulting farmers
- Calibration of the Estuary Health Risk Model
- The ground truthing via rapid risk assessment

ECMP TAG Meeting 06/11/2019

Venue: MidCoast Council Forster

Attendees: Gerard Tuckerman (Chair), Prue Tucker, Louise Duff, Dr. Karen Bettink, Evan Vale, Judy Arasanilai; Matt Bell (MCC); Dr. Rebecca Swanson, Neil Kelleher (DPIE); Scott Carter (DPI-Fisheries); Brian Hughes (HLLS); Dr. Will Glamore (WRL).

This meeting provided technical input into the following studies as they neared completion:

- Coastal Wetlands and Littoral Rainforest Mapping
- The social science project consulting farmers
- Calibration of the Estuary Health Risk Model
- Scoping Study review

ECMP TAG Meeting 07/05/2020

Venue: Zoom

Attendees: Louise Duff (Chair), Prue Tucker, Dr. Karen Bettink, David Bowland Judy Arasanilai; Matt Bell, Gerard Tuckerman (MCC); Neil Kelleher, Dr. Peter Scanes (DPIE); Scott Carter (DPI-Fisheries); Brian Hughes (HLLS); Dr. Will Glamore (WRL); Catherine Knight (Crown Lands); Josh Chivers (NPWS).

This meeting received a briefing and provided advice on the detailed project plan for Stages 3-4 of the Manning River ECMP planning process.

Delivery Partners

Delivery partners include Council teams and other agencies who are taking a lead role in actions or are key stakeholders.

MCC staff workshop 17/09/2020

Venue: MidCoast Council Forster

Attendees: Prue Tucker, Malcolm Hunter, Adam Turville, Richard Pamplin, Tanya Cross, Alex Macvane, Melanie McKinnon, Gerard Tuckerman, Scott Nicholson, Evan Vale, Brock Simpson, Peter Hatton, Tom Doyle, Andrew Staniland, Louise Duff, David Bowland, Judy Arusanilai, Adam Turville

Louise Duff and Prue Tucker facilitated a group discussion covering on three key issues identified within the group: potable water and finance; council infrastructure and strategic planning. Key points and thoughts of participants are summarised below.

GROUP DISCUSSION - WATER & FINANCE

Issues fall into three key areas: water extraction for drinking, sewerage waste water and asset management

Sewerage treatment issues:

- Manning Point and Old Bar treatment are vulnerable to climate change (CC) e.g. sea level rise (SLR) and extreme weather events.
- Need to explore future management options for Old Bar Sewerage Treatment.
- Goal: move to 100% Reuse – agriculture in short term, potable water in long-term

Drinking water extraction

- River system: need to protect and improve raw water quality for ease of treatment.
- Riparian vegetation has an important role.
- Groundwater
- Extraction from Nabiac, Tea Gardens
- Potential issues include saltwater intrusion and contamination. More understanding of this resource is needed. Current work in Nabiac is occurring with Groundwater extraction, treatment, salt intrusion
- Water security - off stream storage will be constructed at Gloucester

Finance:

CMP projects need budget, business case, cashflow fitting Council's budget cycle

GROUP DISCUSSION – COUNCIL INFRASTRUCTURE

Issues

- Asset Management: CMP needs linkages with asset management, including timeframes
- Transport related assets: timing/design/delivery to be informed by CMP
- Emergency management:
- Triggers, Response, EMPLAN
- Mapping: GIS needed
- Flood studies/risk mapping/modelling for CC/SLR
- GRIDFLOW
- Littoral Rainforest and Coastal Wetlands: relevant to Natural Assets group. CMP needs to support funding bids for - restoration/natural asset management
- Emergency planning: Engage with SES to ensure what we develop is consistent and useful re emergency management.
- Risk appetite and risk thresholds should be discussed early and agreed upon with all council departments before CMPs are completed. Identify who should make this decision. Get input from ref group, tech group, internal group. Make decisions then refer to MANEX and then Council
- Risk mapping for LEP/DCP or internal maps to identify planning constraints. Prepare in association with other external agencies and make available to Council staff
- Stormwater system effectiveness: need more holistic investigations which include impacts of CC
- Future infrastructure planning: Studies and CMP need to feed into current and future plans
- Future public spaces: Knowing where future risks are for management of future public spaces
- Community engagement needed so the community aren't 'surprised' by changes to beach access
- 'My beach info' could be a future tool for managing beach access and info. \$400/yr.

GROUP DISCUSSION – STRATEGIC PLANNING

Issues

- Land-use planning and ECMP – need consistency
- Coastal vulnerability - transition and management from CMP into LEP, DCP and SEPPs
- Land-use and planning regulations: expect the CMPs to help provide more land use planning regulations for Cundletown hazard lines, Old Bar and Manning Point (currently in GT DCP).
- Identify post-2100 retreat/management options
- Flood management program

- ASS Management and increasing acidification (& sustainability?)
- Environmental adaptation - wetland migration, riparian management, Council & Crown reserve management
- Climate Change/sustainability policy
- Need to normalise the discussion on how (CMP) plans under development will impact current Council planning instruments

Issue Analysis Discussion Groups

The Project Team facilitated a series of 12 two-hour discussion groups in August 2020 for members of the Technical Advisory Group and delivery partners to analyse issues developed for the CMP.

These discussion groups considered existing management practices, what's working and what's not, opportunities and management options.

The schedule and attendees are shown below. The results of these discussion groups are provided in each of the issue papers contained in Annexure I: The Manning River ECMP Issue Analysis Report (2021)

Issue	meeting date	Participants
Agriculture	2pm-3:30pm Tuesday 11/8/20	Facilitator/Notes: Louise Duff/Prue Tucker Attendees: Albert Mullen, Geoff LeMessurier (HLLS), Brad Henderson (WRL). David Bowland, Drew Morris, Aaron Kelly (MCC) Lyn Booth (M2T Landcare), Kirsty Hughes (CMP Reference group).
Floodplain Drainage Management	10am-11:30am Thursday 13/8/20	Facilitator/Notes: Louise Duff/Prue Tucker Attendees: Gerard Tuckerman, Bob McDonell, Karen Bettink; Tanya Cross (MCC); Geoff LeMessurier (HLLS); Will Glamore, Brad Henderson (WRL)
Modified Flow	2-3:30pm Tuesday 18/8/20	Facilitator/Notes: Louise Duff/Karen Bettink Attendees: David Bowland (MCC water services); Mathew Bell (MCC Natural Systems); Claire Evans (DPIE Water and Science group).
Sewerage and Septic	10-11:30 am Wednesday 19/8/20	Facilitator/Notes: Louise Duff/Karen Bettink Attendees: Malcolm Hunter (MCC Enviro health), Prue Tucker (MCC Natural Systems); Adam Turville (MCC Water Services); Anthony Zammit (NSW Food Authority) Shauna Murray and Matt

		Tesorario (UTS); Ian Crisp (Manning River Oyster Farmers Association)
Vegetation Loss and Degradation	10am-11:30am Thursday 20/8/20	Facilitator/Notes: Louise Duff/Karen Bettink Attendees: Mat Bell, Tanya Cross, Drew Morris (MCC Natural Systems), Geoff LeMessurier, Jesse Gollan (HLLS); Tim Pietsch (Griffith Uni); Chris Scott (MC2T Landcare)
Urban Stormwater, litter and marine debris	2 PM-3:30pm Thursday 20/8/20	Facilitator/Notes: Prue Tucker/Louise Duff Attendees: Erin Masters (MCC Natural Systems); Michael Millang (MCC Drainage Engineer); Becky Hunter (MCC Health and Environment). Tony Wales (Manning River ECMP Reference Group)
Wildlife Conservation	2-3:30pm Tuesday 25/8/20	Facilitator/Notes: Louise Duff/Karen Bettink Attendees: Anthony Marchment, Mat Bell (MCC); Chris Sheed (TIDE), Andrew Steed (Aussie Ark); Reegan Walker, Rye Gollan, Toby Whaleboat, (HLLS); Kerrie Guppie (Manning River Turtle Conservation Group)
Coastal Wetlands	10am-11:30am Wednesday 26/8/20	Facilitator/Notes: Louise Duff/Karen Bettink Attendees: Prue Tucker (MCC); Brian Hughes, Geoff LeMessurier, Kirby Byrne (HLLS); Josh Chivers (NPWS); Tony Wales (CMP CRG).
Entrance Modifications and Modified Hydrology	10-11:30am Thursday 27/8/20	Facilitator/Notes: Louise Duff/Karen Bettink Attendees: Prue Tucker, Andrew Staniland (MCC); Catherine Knight (Crown Lands); Neil Kelleher (DPIE); Will Glamore (WRL); Kevin Morton (Transport for NSW - MIDO).
Community Stewardship	2-3:30pm Thursday 27/8/20	Facilitator/Note: Louise Duff/Karen Bettink Attendees: Erin Masters, Prue Tucker Drew Morris (MCC); Kirsty Hughes (Manning CMP CRG); Jessica Leck (MC2T Landcare); Kirby Byrne (HLLS)
Erosion and Sediment	10-11:30 am Tuesday 1/9/20	Facilitator/Notes: Louise Duff/Drew Morris Attendees: David Bowland (MCC Water Services); Aaron Kelly (MCC Strategic Planning); Geoff Le Messurier, Kirby Byrne (HLLS); Scott Carter, Kylie Russell (DPI Fisheries)

Flooding, Coastal Inundation Tidal Inundation	10am-11:30am Wednesday 2/9/20	Facilitator/Notes: Louise Duff/Drew Morris Attendees: Evan Vale (MCC Flood Engineer), Peter Hatton (MCC Emergency planning); Andrew Staniland (MCC Natural Systems); Will Glamore, Bradley Hancock (WRL), Neil Kelleher (DPIE); Reagan Walker (HLLS)
---	-------------------------------------	---

Management Options – Refinement and Acceptability

In February-March 2021 a further 9 workshop sessions were held to firm up management actions and convert them to S.M.A.R.T format (Specific, Attainable, Realistic, Timely).

The schedule and attendees are set out below. Results of this consultation are documented in Annexure K: The Manning River ECMP Management Options Evaluation Report (Salients 2021).

DATE	Title of Session	Invitees
TUES 16/2	Water Services Consultation: Water Quality-Ecosystem Health and Stewardship	Salients: David, Mark Wainwright, Nigel Rajaratna MCC: Lou, Prue, Tracey Hamer/Adam Turville
TUES 16/2	Strategic Planning	Salients: David, Nigel MCC: Lou, Alex Macvean, Prue, Harry Lloyd
TUES 16/2	Stormwater and ESC - Water Quality-Ecosystem Health and Stewardship	Salients: David Wainwright, Mark Wainwright, Nigel Rajaratnam MCC: Prue Tucker, Lou Duff HLLS: Brian Hughes
WED 17/2	Biodiversity	Salients: David, Troy, Nigel MCC: Lou, Prue, Mat Bell, Karen Bettink HLLS: Reagan Walker BCT: Toby Eastoe DPI: Scott Carter
Wed 17/2	Stewardship - working with landholders	Salients: David, Troy, Nigel MCC: Lou, Prue, Tanya, Gerard HLLS: Albert Mullen
Wed 17/2	Water Quality and Ecosystem Health (Acid sulfate soil	Salients: David, Troy, Nigel MCC: Lou, Prue, Tanya, Gerard Tuckerman

	remediation, coastal wetlands, riparian veg)	HLLS: Rye Gollan DPI Fisheries: Kylie Russell
WED 24/2	Social and Economic Values	Salients: David, Troy, Nigel MCC: Lou, Prue, Robyn Brennan, Deb Tuckerman, Dan Aldridge, Sharon Bultitude
WED 10/3	Climate Change, MER & Scientific Research Program	Salients: David, Nigel MCC: Lou, Prue, Gerard, Tanya, Evan
TUES 16/3	Aboriginal Custodianship	Salients: David MCC: Lou, Prue HLLS: Toby Whaleboat; TIDE: Chris Sheed LTLALC: Joedie Lawler (apology)
WED 17/3	Converting actions to S.M.A.R.T format	Salients: David, Troy, Nigel MCC: Lou, Gerard Tuckerman, Nic Coleman, Peter Goonan HLLS: Rye Gollan, Brian Hughes, Reegan Walker

Final confirmation of Management Actions

Prior to putting the draft Manning River ECMP on public exhibition, Council's project team entered a series of one-on-one consultations with lead agencies to finalise the most appropriate wording for actions and confirm budget commitments. The Management Actions and Business Schedules presented for exhibition were agreed and deemed acceptable through these sessions.

Agency	Contact Name	Action #	Abbreviated descriptor	Comments	Action agreed Y/N
MCC	Jamie Condie, Daniel Park, Greg Blaze, Shane Hulands, Brad Ferguson	1.09 (revised to 1.06)	MCC ESC	Face to face meeting 12/5/21. Agreed to the intent of the action and the need to have a holistic across council approach to improving ESC practices on our own work and within the development industry. Agreed we needed a project team to deliver a project like this and undertake collaborative compliance work.	Yes
MCC	Shane Huland, Brad Ferguson	1.09	Compliance program	Face to face meeting 17/5/21. Revised action so that it became more holistic including education and compliance. Action revised and agreed.	Yes with new wording
MCC	Evan Vale, Oleg Makarynskyy	2.15 (revised to 2.13)	MER	Face to face meeting 12/5/21. Confirmed that the budget for entrance monitoring and water level monitoring was appropriate, he agreed. Minor amendments to the text in the MER.	Y with minor amendments
	Technical Working Group	2.15 (revised to 2.13)	MER	Email feedback provided and actioned where appropriate	Yes with major improvements

	Evan Vale, Oleg Makarynskyy	2.09	Stormwater plans	Face to face meeting 12/5/21. Agreed with action. Amended the budget as there is a lot of monitoring involved in understanding the stormwater assets.	Yes with minor amendments
MCC	Evan Vale, Oleg Makarynskyy	3.03	Emergency Planning coastal inundation	Face to face meeting 12/5/21. Deleted action as it is not relevant, the action already occurs.	No - deleted action
MCC	Evan Vale, Oleg Makarynskyy, Scott Nicholson	3.02	SLR Risk for Council assets	Face to Face meeting 12/5/21. This action is already being completed in house; no budget required.	Yes with minor amendments
MCC	Ryan Fenning, Garry Mead	2.15	MER	Met 19/5/21 with James, Gary, Ryan. Belinda, Judy, Prue, Lou and decided to reinstate the monitoring table referring to the data that is already collected by Water Services.	Yes with amendments
MCC	Terry Inkson	4.03	Pest and weed plan	Discussed 5/5/21	Yes
MCC	Scott Nicholson	2.13	Unsealed Roads	Not able to fund from Transport Assets until there is rate harmonisation. Creek crossings are not an efficient use of funds for roads team. Email agreement 14/5/21 (Prue)	Yes, with amendments
MCC	Scott Nicholson, Evan Vale	4.01	Fish passage	Discussed 12/5 sent email for confirmation	Budget not committed
MCC	Malcolm Hunter, Gary Mead	6.01	Pathogen source control	Met 19/5 to firm up detail of pathogen testing and source control plans.	Yes, with new wording

Hunter Local Land Services	Clare McDougall, Glenn Lyons, Lyndel Wilson		Multiple actions	4/5 met Rye Golan to review budget lines. 26/4 presented overview of ECMP. 10/5 meeting to discuss all HLLS actions line by line including who leads, wording, budget, strategic focus	Full review provided and accepted
Crown Lands	Catherine Knight Malcolm Robertson	2.04 8.02	Model Good Catchment Management Practice Improve compliance	Telephone consultation 19/5, emailed agreement. 2.04 Deleted reference to remediation. Open to remediation projects if led and funded by partner agency. 8.02: Positive agreement to improve interagency partnerships for a more holistic approach. Minor amendments to this effect.	Yes, with amendments
Coastal Protection Scheme and DPI-Fisheries	Maria Plytarias, Max Osborne	2.01	ASS remediation	Meeting regarding opportunity to acquire and remediate Jones Island. All parties positive. Agreed to add this to ASS action 2.01 and practice notes. CPPS agreed tube named as a stakeholder.	Yes
TfNSW - Maritime	Sonia Mackay, Mike Baldwin	2.12	Monitor and Report on Recreational Boating in High Risk Boatwash Erosion Areas and Consider Source Control	Met 13/5. Agreement not provided.	No - action deleted
TfNSW - MIDO	Kevin Morton	2.07	Entrance opening recommendations	Telephone discussion	Yes

DPI-Fisheries	Scott Carter/Scott Nichols	4.01	Barriers to fish passage	Can't commit a budget allocation	Yes but no funds allocated
DPI-Fisheries	Kylie Russell	8.02	MEMS governance action 9.1	This action related to Northern Rivers and is complete	No – action deleted
PTLALC	Joedie Lawler	5.01-40.4	Aboriginal custodianship all	14/5 discussed and emailed actions for review. 17/5 met and provided general feedback	Yes, but integrate Aboriginal engagement throughout program

Community and Industry groups

Women in Dairy Group 1/11/2019

Facilitator: Louise Duff
Venue: Hunter Local Land Services meeting room, Taree
Attendees: Megan Nicholson, Rose Crisp, Debbie Polson, Marelle Robinson, Daintry Gerrand, Sophie Donovan, Rachel Nicholson

Summary of discussion

1. What do you love most about the Manning River, its waterways and the estuary?
 - Its ability to provide
 - Still, quiet times to enjoy i.e. not overused with jet skis etc.
 - Working river i.e. fish and oysters
 - The life it brings to the Manning Valley. The produce it produces, the area it covers is diverse and rich. 1
 - The beautiful energy it gives and sustains our existence
 - Ability to row long distances.
2. It is important to protect...
 - Shorelines
 - Mangroves
 - Water quality
 - Fish habitat
 - Riverbanks falling into river (erosion)
 - The aquatic ecosystem
 - Birdlife
 - Frogs
 - Crabs
3. Where are your favourite places and why?
 - Ellenborough Falls – absolutely beautiful catchment and single drop flat
 - Potaroo Falls – Very lovely walk in the falls and secluded
 - Croki Pool – great place to relax and swim – scenic outlook
 - River Bank in Taree
 - Crowdy Head beaches – clean, beautiful, lots of places for picnics
 - The Dingo – in good season, swimming, birdlife, platypus
 - Croki – mangroves – so much ecology.
4. What keeps you engaged?
 - Observing the changes when you regenerate native vegetation
5. Do you think Rivercare Groups are a good idea?
 - Yes. The key is to have an amicable group to start with - shared environmental values and the social side is important get on with each other.
 - Need a project to form the initial groups so they can move on from there. Environmental aspect – having good understanding of aims and what is it I want to see happen? Saving Council work and money and they repay with bark chips etc. Coordinating with other community members to help out.
 - People along the river need to know what is happening up and down river and how each affects the other.

Women in Dairy Group 23/6/2021

Facilitator: Alisha Madsen

Venue: MidCoast Council Yalawanyi Ganya

Attendees: Megan Nicholson, Marelle Robinson, Debra Polson, Rose Crisp, Daintry Gerrand

A briefing was provided on the Manning River estuary and catchment Management Program covering the key issues and actions relating to agriculture, details of the public exhibition and how to make a submission. Feedback will be considered during the final revision of the document, including the more detailed practice notes.

Summary of discussion

Action 1.01 Engage river users and the whole community in an engagement program to promote understanding and stewardship of the river; and

Action 1.02 Promote whole-farm planning and Best Management Practice for catchment outcomes

Promoting environmental practices:

- It would be good to get a resource on Best Management Practice and let people know what's expected as standard management
- Need workshops to share and spread the information.
- Engagement programs should focus on the needs of the farmers, coming from the bottom up.
- Build networks at the grass roots,
- Keep it local with a practical focus on farm. Council people need to come on site and bring positive energy, encouragement, expertise, conversations, social contact. We don't have the community spaces anymore; you must visit properties.
- Use a subcatchment focus, (e.g. Dingo, Bobin), connect landholders and properties for better outcomes.
- Link with the industry groups like the Midcoast Dairy Advancement group. Dairy NSW are providing more environmental information.
- Build on existing practices and past projects. The effluent program reached a big number. The audit done by industry bodies through food authority's safe food program is a good example– participating dairies have a farm plan and the focus is on effluent management.

Reaching new landholders

- Changing ownership of the land is having a real impact in places like Killabakh. A lot of properties are being sold and new people coming in.
- Farms have been sub-divided, more landholders involved.
- New landholders don't have history, connections – there's a loss of community cohesion
- The new landholders kit and self-assessment kit is a good tool.
- We could use the self-assessment tool and do it with the farmer. Help them prioritise.
- Can we offer a property profile service? Catchment officers could visit a property and do a property profile to identify management priorities.

Disaster resilience

- Disaster resilience is a layer in the whole farm planning process promoted by Hunter Local Land Services.
- For example –where will you put your vehicles and equipment, who will do it?
- Women in Dairy received some funds to help dairy farmers improve their resilience.
- Immediately after the March '21 flood the focus is disaster recovery. But the next step will be whole farm planning including disaster resilience planning.

- There could be a program with a consultant who can visit properties and assist with the planning.
- Absentee farming is a problem. During the flood people weren't on farm to rescue stock.
- We want to connect communities again, so we all support each other.

Action 3.04 – Work collaboratively with landholders and other stakeholders to develop an adaptation plan to mitigate the long-term (50-100 years) risk of climate change impacts on the floodplain

- Needs to relate to upstream catchment as well.
- We need information on what pasture will be best. Different varieties of kikuyu?

General comments

- Reference group - think about who will be represented. for some people their livelihood depends on the river, others use it for recreation etc.
- Coastal wetlands – need to cross the planning area boundary and work closer to the coast

Manning River Turtle Conservation Group 18/10/2020

The input below was provided at a facilitated workshop with members of the Manning River Turtle Conservation group. Themes discussed included **vision, flagship species, key issues, opportunities, management actions and partnership opportunities.**

Facilitator: Louise Duff
Attendees: Clare Rourke (CR); Julia Driscoll (JD); Kerry Guppy (KG); Bronwyn Ellis (BE).

Summary of discussion

ENVIRONMENTAL VALUES

Q 1: Imagine the healthiest environment you can hope for in the Manning River and estuary. What does it look like?

It's clean. Beautiful. Lots of wild spaces. Public spaces are respected and enjoyed and protected. Water is flowing, not stagnant or depleted or polluted. Riparian zones are vegetated, filled with animal/birds, minimal feral pests. Exceptional water quality. No cattle in the river. People enjoying activities, respectful of others.

Well vegetated riparian zone with rich biodiversity corridors of local flora and fauna. Places for humans to share this healthy environment in co-existence with nature.

Crystal clear streams, no dairy effluent in them. Riverbanks without weeds i.e. privet. Intact vegetation buffers at least 40m wide.

If you protect the ecosystem health everything else follows.

SOCIAL VALUES

Q2: Now think about people and the way they use the river and estuary. What do you want FOR our community? What does the river need FROM our community?

For our community

- Healthy, clean, beautiful, diverse, native veg.
- Water is life. The Manning River has always provided life for millions of years and continues to do so as our community evolves.

For our rivers

- The river needs our respect and care.
- Don't take too much water
- Protect our banks from livestock/cars/pollution
- Leave as WILD where possible.
- Legislate against clearing and police it.

ECONOMIC VALUES

Q 3: How do you envision the river and estuary supporting people's livelihoods and our regional economy?

Healthy systems

- clean - *Allows for tourism and local use*

- biodiversity
- access, but also adequate protection

The river and estuary support not just the industries i.e. farming and tourism, but the entire community's wellbeing – having a healthy environment in which to live and play.

HAZARDS AND RISK

Q. 4: This is the last question on VISION. When you think of hazards that affect people's safety and property, such as flood, pollution events, storm surge or in the longer term climate change, what does good management look like?

- Good warning systems to public re water/erosion etc.
- Good and effective early management organisation – SES etc.
- Good fore-planning!

To manage climate change impacts:

- river running dry was a shock and a wakeup call.
- Drought reflected climate change and showed us where we are heading. Drought will become more prevalent
- adaptation (where necessary)
- technology
- new methods/initiatives farming/ living.

Q.5: Flagship species?

1. Manning River Turtle
2. Platypus
3. Bull shark is a Biripi totem. Tinonee means place of the shark
2. Grey headed flying foxes
3. Spiny Crayfish

ISSUES/PROBLEMS/THREATS

Q. 6: What do you think are the top three problems we need to address to improve the Manning River and estuary??

- Water quality (effluent/pollution)
- Irrigation/extraction
- Livestock access (fence off riparian zones)
- Riparian vegetation habitat corridors - pest and weed control
- bank erosion
- Private dams

Q. 7: What opportunities have you thought of to improve the environment of the estuary?

- Establish a riparian reserve on public land
- Incentives for landholders to keep livestock out of riparian zones.
- Police irrigation.
- Work with landowners to restore riparian habitat.

Q. 8: What about opportunities to improve the way we USE the estuary for recreation and development?

- Eco tourism?
- Encourage new technologies/methods in farming etc.? Universities involvement.

MANAGEMENT ACTIONS

Q 9: What would you like to see Council, other agencies and the community including landholders and urban residents do to manage the river and the estuary?

- Manage plastic.
- Promote better stewardship, respect for the river – it's not an entitlement.
- Continue the refuge project.
- Dingo conservation as an apex predator.
- Police water extraction.
- Livestock exclusion from riparian zones
- Refuge project.
- Minimise clearing
- Sensitive and thoughtful development.

Q. 10: How would you group like to be involved in ongoing management and/or monitoring?

- Waterwatch monitoring and Citizen science
- Be an advocate for the turtle as a flagship species for the river.
- Continue participating in forums, science research

Gloucester Environment Group 15/6/2021

Facilitator: Louise Duff

Attendees: John Watts (President), Penny Drake-Brockman, Di Montague, Tibor Kovats, Peta Tynan

Summary of discussion

General Discussion and Introductions

- Environment Group has been going for 25 years, 80 members, RiverCare (headed up by Penny), resurgence 8 years ago
- RiverCare focuses on Privet along the reach of the Gloucester River
- Koala Ways project, 850 trees at 6 areas of three properties, Gresford Nursery supplied, great program and Council have provided some labour through Anthony Marchment (MCC)
- GEG discuss and make submissions to Council plans
- Environmental advocacy on various issues including mining, coal seam gas, river flows, the Tree Preservation Order
- Sue Watts runs plastic free Gloucester
- Energise Gloucester – aim to build a solar farm
- Community Garden has opened recently, John Thorpe did Welcome to Country at the recent opening of the Community Gardens
- On ground works
- Once a month bushwalks through GEG and quarterly feasts with seasonal produce.
- Discussed need for a Landcare Group for Gloucester. Historically there was a group around Gloucester River.
- Links with (Worimi) Aboriginal community, in the park is Minimbah Aboriginal Gardens, GEG helped rejuvenate the Aboriginal gardens
- Tibor asked about funding, and how actions are proposed to be funded in the ECMP: “people prioritise the environment is that reflected in this budget comparatively?”
- (LD: Total budget for ten-year program is approximately \$20M, as set out in the budget schedules).

Louise gave an intro to the requirement of the Coastal Management Act and provided an overview of the ECMP development process and document:

- the whole of catchment approach
- Reference Group membership
- the Technical Advisory Group
- Themes and objectives
- Main issues – promoting stewardship, remediating acid sulfate soil, restoring riparian vegetation and coastal wetlands, preparing for climate change.
- Noted opportunity in Gloucester and surrounds for riparian veg rehabilitation

Discussion

- Tibor – raised the issue of restoring steep slopes, which are commonly clearing in this area, do we have a handle on the status of agriculture philosophy in the region? LD discusses the regenerative agriculture movement
- Peta talked on all the education resources available; economics calling the change not the environmental outcomes. It’s important to leverage off productivity benefits to farming.
- Peta talked about ProGraze – full education program. Take the ideals to the farmers, e.g. using seaweed feed, regenerative ag, demonstrating a hand-in-hand approach to supporting farmers through the change

- Penny asked how much funding is available to fence off riverbanks. Lou spoke on MEMS budget (\$210 annually from HLLS) and MCC co-contribution (\$75K per year).
- Peta: farms around Gloucester have very tricky layouts of paddocks don't always allow fencing off riverbank because of access.
- Di said lots of farmers are absentee, cattle wandering is an issue.

ISSUES: Round table with each participant asked to identify and discuss what they think are the top three environmental issues:

Tibor –

- i) The steep cleared agricultural slopes; revegetate, strategize this, e.g. does it link to the Koala Management Plan?
- ii) streambanks at Mograni Creek, dissected landscape, streams run into it and they are degraded grassy swales, there is a vineyard, this could be a subcatchment project if they are willing to collaborate. Good example locally is James doing tree planting on his dairy farm, mix of farming and environmental.
- iii) Establishing a Landcare group in Gloucester to drive some change

Di -

- i) Degraded riparian zone – weeds, high energy maintenance, encourage regeneration with diverse species.
- ii) Biodiversity: Platypus concerns, turtles, wildlife generally
- iii) Drought & pasture cover – no succession planting, lack of shade trees. Plantings are in the farmers best interest because they do care about their animals!
- iv) Supporting regenerative farming and demonstration site: Find farms with landholders who want to re-green their property, where it's not the most productive landscape – how to transition. Have a referral service and guest speakers

John

- i) Riparian restoration: especially building on privet control through RiverCare. Active regeneration.
- ii) Connect the landscape: bring biodiversity back. The Bucketts needs protection, and stepping stones to bushland through private land, stepping stones would be helpful here
- iii) Land clearing: Active clearing, spraying also killing trees, removal of Native Veg Act, lots of clearing still happening, lack of compliance
- iv) Aboriginal custodianship of this area, the significance of the Bucketts (men's sacred site) and Mograni (more a women's area) recognise these cultural places.
- i) Capacity building and employment: Local tradies directly funded maintenance of riparian weeds; boost economy
- ii) Shade trees and whole farm planning

Penny

- i) Degraded riparian zone: Sad state of the Avon Valley, hits the flats and privet is rampant.
- ii) Freshwater wetlands: Restore the railway reserve to original freshwater wetlands
- iii) Loss of biodiversity: Undergrowth of corridors is lacking so therefore contributing to decline in bush birds, increases predation to cats, and butcher birds, understory brings insects in, birds bring seed
- iv) Trees on farms: Encourage farmers to keep part of their land for forest, promote the role of native vegetation. Bringing in the succession trees on farms, you have the big trees and nothing underneath. Healthy vegetated areas to connect landscape
- v) Irrigating during drought
- vi) Logging of old growth forests

Peta

- i) Work with farmers: so much is privately owned. Marrying production with environmental wins

- ii) Economic benefits: Create employment and incentives – landholders could earn an income from assisting in regeneration - offer them a solution.
- iii) Grazing of the cattle if done well is productive, and moves the nutrients around, lets the pasture extend its roots. Don't overstock. Encourage and incentivise
- iv) Incentivise portions of forest on land, make it carbon neutral
- v) Comment: Young Aboriginal people coming together Josh Gilbert running program.

Management Actions

Discussed relevant actions from the ECMP including stewardship, reserves, water quality, refuge pools, Aboriginal custodianship actions, land for wildlife opportunities

Mid Coast 2 Tops Landcare 23/6/2021

Facilitator: Louise Duff

Attendees: Robyn Lamond, Lyn Booth, Jessica Leck, Daintry Gerrand

A briefing was provided on the Manning River Estuary and Catchment Management Program (ECMP) covering the key issues and actions relating to best practice management, education and capacity building through community and stakeholder engagement, details of the public exhibition and how to make a submission. Feedback will be considered during the final revision of the document, including the more detailed practice notes.

Summary of discussion

General

- Overview of consultation process, including regular consultation through the reference group, with Chris Scott being the Landcare rep, discussion regarding the lack of reporting back as a shortfall.
- Rationale and benefits of preparing the program under the Coastal Management Act, the MEMS Act, legislative requirements, and the co-funding opportunities from the NSW Government's Coast and Estuary Program when the ECMP is certified
- Discussion around the two separate plans; the Manning River ECMP and the Old Bar- Manning Point Coastal Management Program.
- Discussion about the risk assessment and rapid site assessment (ground truthing project) that occurred throughout the Manning. Referred attendees to these documents in the annexures to the main Manning River ECMP on the haveyoursay.midcoast.nsw.gov.au/our-manning-river webpage
- Noted MCC Catchment Officers are available to accompany Landcare coordinators on farm visits
- Where Landcare would like to be added or omitted as a partner organisation, both in the issues section and in the actions section, please make suggestions to MCC for consideration. Suggest one person makes a submission on behalf of Landcare. Refer to Annexure J- the practice notes for more information on the management actions.
- Issue with the wording regarding farmers – concern document reads that all Manning farmers are “bad”, the suggestion was to potentially re-word this so that the MRECM acknowledges the farmers that do the right thing.
- Question, when we are looking for people to do on ground works, are we looking specifically at sub catchments or at the whole? Answer - Spatial priorities have been identified but projects will be considered across the whole catchment.
- Question, are there any planned in-stream restoration projects? Answer - not at this stage but please include in submission if you have feedback/ suggestions.

Action 1.01 Engage river users and the whole community in an engagement program to promote understanding and stewardship of the river;

Discussion regarding Stewardship (training and educational resources):

- Discussed using a priority sub-catchment approach to target focus within actions.
- Discussed other active community groups including Young Farmers Connect and Forest Action Group out at Elands (Helen Hannah's daughter) that could be involved.
- MCC and Landcare need to create a strategic stakeholder plan, being mindful of the work already being done
- BioBlitz program could be organised by the newly appointed Landcare person
- Landcare hoping to hold night events
- Discussed bringing in experts to speak, possibility of hosting a series of talks

Action 1.02 Promote whole-farm planning and Best Management Practice for catchment outcomes

- Creation of jointly branded materials
- Whole farm planning
- Old Rivercare plans had great methodology in that they were very targeted, walked the river, provided great diagrams and suggestions for on ground works, people had specifics