

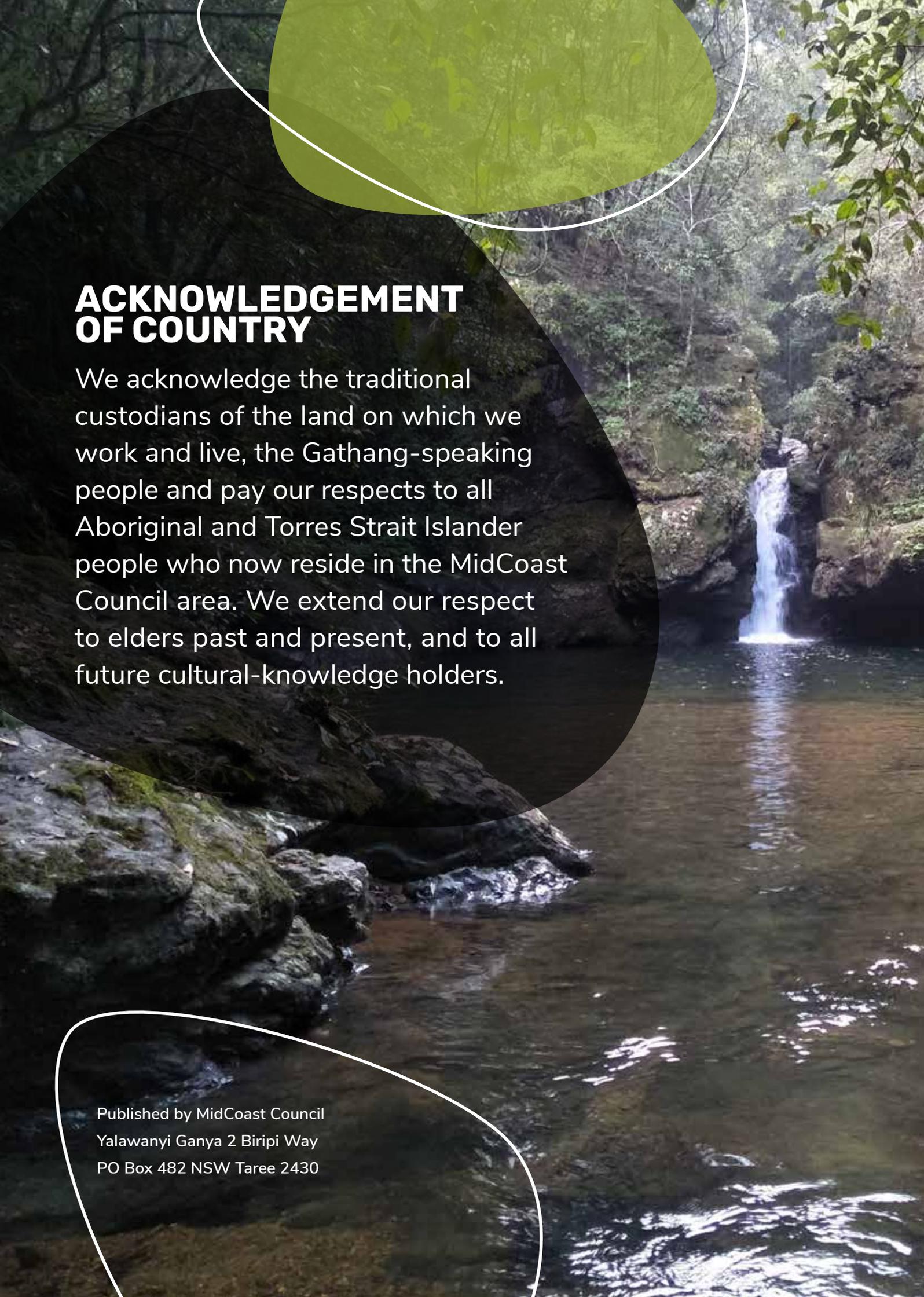


**MIDCOAST**  
council



**MIDCOAST 2032:  
SHARED VISION, SHARED RESPONSIBILITY**

# **COMMUNITY STRATEGIC PLAN 2022-2032**



## **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.

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Yalawanyi Ganya 2 Biripi Way  
PO Box 482 NSW Taree 2430

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# INTRODUCTION

**Each council in NSW develops a Community Strategic Plan on behalf of their community. The plan sets out the community's vision for the future and the long-term objectives and strategies to get there.**

The MidCoast 2030: Shared Vision, Shared Responsibility Community Strategic Plan 2020-2030, was developed in 2018, after extensive consultation with the MidCoast community and stakeholders.

Councils review the Community Strategic Plan following an election of a new council. This revised MidCoast 2032: Shared Vision, Shared Responsibility Community Strategic Plan 2022-2032, was reviewed following a check-in with the community from August to October 2021. We also took into consideration all of the feedback given to us over the four years since the adoption of the original plan. While we would usually include a face-to-face engagement for the check-in, this was not possible due to COVID restrictions.

Although this version is a revision rather than a new Community Strategic Plan, it looks quite different. This is because new guidelines for the document were released by the Office of Local Government in September 2021, which meant we had to make some changes to the structure and content to meet the requirements of the new legislation. The Community Values from the previous version of the Community Strategic Plan have been used as guiding principles in this revision so that the spirit and intent remain the same.

The plan now clearly shows the role that Council plays in the delivery of each strategy and the partners that have a role. We have also improved the quality of the performance measures to make it easier to see how we are progressing towards the community's vision.



# A MESSAGE FROM THE MAYOR

**I am pleased to present this plan to our community.**

This is your plan – it is what you have told us is important to you. It is an important document not just for us at MidCoast Council, but for the whole of our community.

It captures the ideas, priorities and values of our community. It tells a story of what is important to us and the future we want for our region.

We are a region that is diverse, in our geography, the character of our towns and villages, and our people, and a region that has battled our fair share of adversity over the last few years. Since the development of the original Community Strategic Plan we have experienced drought, record breaking bushfires and floods, and a COVID-19 pandemic.

Through all of this, the MidCoast community has demonstrated a great sense of community connectedness, capacity and resilience. With climate change impacts we can expect more extreme weather events, and we will continue to work closely with our communities to be better prepared and able to recover more quickly.

This iteration of our Community Strategic Plan is a refreshed version of our current Community Strategic Plan and we have set about capturing these changes in our community.

During 2023-24 we will be having a longer, more detailed conversation with our community to develop a new longer-term Community Strategic Plan for the MidCoast. During that conversation, our aim will be to ensure our next Community Strategic Plan is even more reflective of our community's needs, aims and aspirations.

A Community Strategic Plan is a plan for the whole of our community and we recognise there are so many agencies, groups and individuals who contribute to supporting, developing and shaping our future.

As a Council we look to it as a guide for where we should direct our energies and efforts to support the needs of our community.

Our Delivery Program and Operational Plan are the way we let our community know our commitments.

I look forward to leading the Council in linking our priorities to those of the community articulated in this plan.

**Claire Pontin**

**Mayor - MidCoast Council**



# OUR REGION

Home to around 95,000 people, the MidCoast region offers our diverse community a wide range of lifestyle opportunities.

Located on the mid north coast of NSW, the geographical area covers more than 10,000 km<sup>2</sup> and extends from the coastline, west to the escarpment of the Great Dividing Range. The Biripi and Worimi people are the traditional owners of the land.

The region is well known for its natural beauty and is a key holiday destination that attracts a large number of tourists and visitors throughout the seasons. The area spans from sparkling beaches on the coast to mountains in the hinterland, with expansive national parks and green spaces in between. It includes the Manning River valley, the Wallis, Smiths and Myall Lakes systems, the northern foreshore of Port Stephens, the agricultural hinterland and rugged, forested ranges of the Woko and Tapin Tops National Parks, and the World Heritage-listed Barrington Tops National Park.

These natural features contribute to our lifestyles, livelihoods and wellbeing, and protecting and celebrating them is an important focus for our future.





**192km**  
of coastline

**10,052 km<sup>2</sup>**



**3,607km**  
**ROADS**  
**657**  
**BRIDGES**

**8** **PROTECTED ABORIGINAL PLACES**  
under National Parks and Wildlife Act

**58** **NATIONAL PARKS & RESERVES**

A white icon of a tree with a sun above it, set against a green background.

**195** towns villages & localities

A grey icon of a location pin and a road, set against a dark grey background.

**5** **COASTAL LAKES & LAGOONS**  
**ONE MARINE PARK**

A photograph of a coastal lake with reeds and water, set against a teal background.

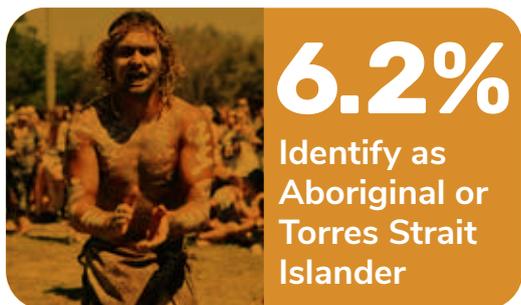
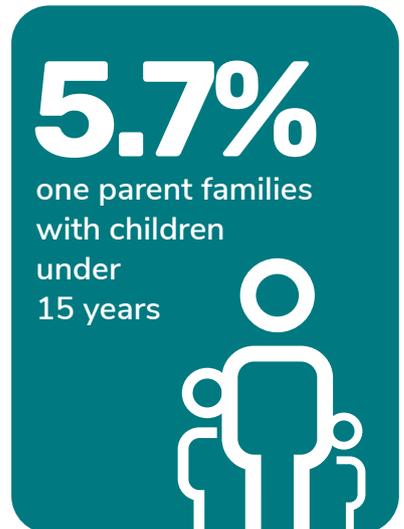
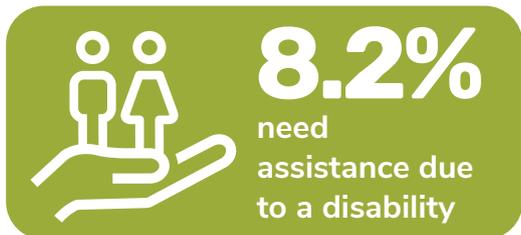
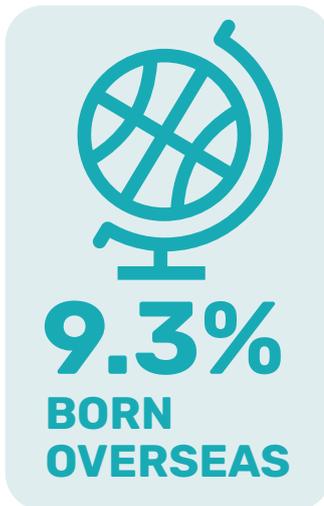
# OUR COMMUNITY

The MidCoast region is home to a diverse community that is expected to grow by almost 30% to 122,962 people by 2036. Our current population is spread across 195 of towns and villages, all of which have their own unique qualities.

The region is a popular location for retirees, and our ageing community enriches us with its diversity and experience, and supports our strong volunteer sector. This segment of our community is also responsible for our large, and growing aged care sector, providing a specialised service industry in our region.

The region is also a popular place for raising young children, and families are an important and valued part of our community. While educational opportunities are increasing, there is often a need for young people to leave the area to pursue higher education or employment opportunities.

With 6.2 per cent of our community identifying as Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander, the MidCoast has significant opportunity to embrace Indigenous cultures and enhance the inclusiveness of our community.



# THE INTEGRATED PLANNING AND REPORTING (IP&R) FRAMEWORK

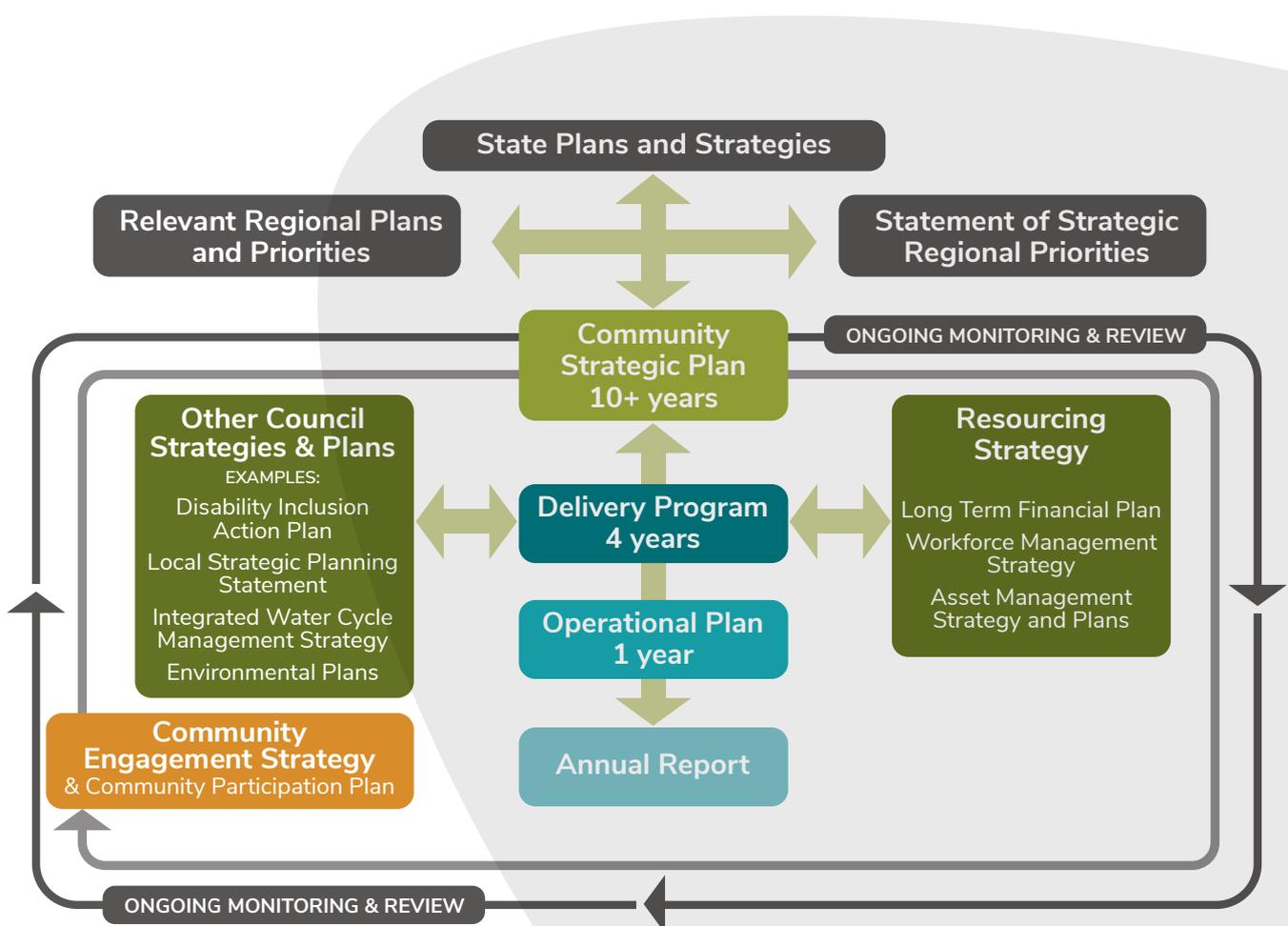
The IP&R framework was first introduced by the Office of Local Government in 2009. It is based on the idea that Council planning should be linked directly to community priorities. The framework is made up of several different plans that work alongside each other.

When looked at together, the plans show how:

- the community has expressed their vision and priorities
- community members, community groups and others can play an active role in shaping the future
- the community's priorities flow down to other plans, including the services and activities in the yearly operational plans
- resources will be managed to work towards the vision and priorities, while also balancing expectations with affordability
- progress is being made towards the community's vision and priorities through measuring, monitoring and reporting.

The following diagram shows how the plans fit together.

For more information visit: <https://www.olg.nsw.gov.au/councils/integrated-planning-and-reporting/>



## Community Strategic Plan

The Community Strategic Plan is the highest-level plan. It is a long-term plan (over ten or more years). Its purpose is to identify the community's vision, hopes and priorities and the strategies needed to achieve them. Part of the planning process includes looking at the challenges, pressures and opportunities that may affect the community during the period covered by the plan, and the level of resources that will realistically be available.

While it is up to Council to prepare the plan on behalf of the community, it is not a Council plan. Other partners, such as State government agencies, community groups, service providers, residents and ratepayers also have a role to play. The aim of the plan is to encourage Council, the community and other groups and government agencies to work together towards our vision for the future.

## Delivery Program

The Delivery Program lines up with the strategies in the Community Strategic Plan and shows the focus areas for the term of the elected Council (usually four years).

## Operational Plan and Budget

The Operational Plan and Budget line up with the focus areas in the Delivery Program and show the individual projects, activities and services that Council will deliver each year.

## Resourcing Strategy

The Resourcing Strategy shows how Council will manage resources (money, people and assets) to work towards the focus areas in the Delivery Program. It needs to balance priorities with expectations and affordability. The Resourcing Strategy is made up of four inter-related plans:

- Long-Term Financial Plan
- Workforce Management Strategy
- Asset Management Strategy and Plans
- Information & Communications Technology (ICT) Strategy

## Community Engagement Strategy

The Community Engagement Strategy shows how Council engages with the community and other relevant stakeholders to develop and complete the Community Strategic Plan. It outlines how Council will regularly engage with the community to determine the community's needs and priorities.

## Reference to Federal, State and Regional context, priorities, strategies and plans

This Community Strategic Plan is informed by a variety of other government plans. These include:

- Regional plans such as the Hunter Regional Plan, the MidCoast Regional Economic Development Strategy 2018-22 and the Hunter Joint Organisation Strategic Plan.
- NSW State plans such as the Premier's Priorities, the Statewide Destination Management Plan and the Net Zero Plan Stage 1: 2020-2030 (to act on climate change and reach net zero emissions by 2050).
- National plans such as the National Agreement on Closing the Gap (to work together to overcome the inequality experienced by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people).

## Other Council Strategies and Plans

There are many other Council plans and strategies that support or inform the IP&R plans. Some of these are legislated (required by law). They include (but are not limited to):

- Ageing Strategy
- Child Safety Plan\*
- Climate Change Strategy
- Coastal Management Plans\*
- Cultural Plan
- Disability Inclusion Action Plan\*
- Floodplain Risk Management Plans
- Greening Strategy
- Heritage Strategy
- Integrated Water Cycle Management Strategy\*
- Local Environmental Plans\*
- Local Strategic Planning Statement\*
- Pedestrian Access & Mobility Plan\* and Bike Plan
- Regional Economic Development Plan
- Destination Management Plan
- Water & Sewer Strategic Business Plan\*
- Youth Strategic Plan

\* Indicates the plans that are legislated.

## Monitoring and Reporting

A number of reports are prepared to show how work is progressing with the IP&R plans.

State of MidCoast – Shows what progress has been made towards achieving the community vision and strategic objectives during the last Council term. This is presented to new Council after the elections.

MidCoast Council Annual Report – Shows how things have progressed over the previous year as set out in the Operational Plan, including financial statements.

Six-month Progress Reports – These show how things are progressing with the Delivery Program.

Monthly and quarterly finance reports are also prepared.



# SOCIAL JUSTICE PRINCIPLES

Social and environmental justice is important in developing a community plan such as the Community Strategic Plan. The four principles of social justice are:

- **EQUITY** – There should be fairness in decision making, and prioritising and allocation of resources, particularly for those who are vulnerable or in need. Everyone should have a fair opportunity to participate in the future of the community.
- **ACCESS** – Everyone should have fair access to services, resources and opportunities to improve their quality of life.
- **PARTICIPATION** – Everyone should have the maximum opportunity to genuinely participate in decisions that affect their lives.
- **RIGHTS** – Equal rights should be established and promoted, with opportunities provided for people from diverse linguistic, cultural and religious backgrounds to participate in community life.

Including these as guiding principles helps to make sure that everyone is welcome and can participate in local life; that everyone has access to the services they need; and that everyone is heard.

These principles were used to review this plan by:

- implementing the principles of engagement outlined in the MidCoast Council Community Engagement Strategy
- reviewing the revised plan against the principles to ensure that all objectives and strategies are fair and that no one is excluded or disadvantaged
- ensuring the plan is informed by a clear understanding of community trends, needs and social profiles
- providing opportunities for the community to participate in the review.





## ENGAGING WITH OUR COMMUNITY

**The MidCoast Community Strategic Plan represents the community's vision and Council's commitment for the MidCoast. It has been developed through a series of community conversations, engagements and consultations over a long period of time.**

Each stage of engagement was informed by our Community Engagement Strategy, which reflected social justice principles, and identified stakeholder groups and methods of engagement.

During the initial development of the plan, between 2016 and 2018, we consulted extensively with our community, and more than 3,000 participants interacted with us through channels that included online surveys, polls, phone surveys, workshops, focus groups, and community meetings.

The purpose of our conversations with the community over this time were two-fold: to develop draft long-term community goals, and then review and test them with our community to ensure they reflect our community's aspirations.

Since the adoption of the original plan in 2018, we have continued to work with and listen to our community to understand what is important to them and how we can support the delivery of positive community outcomes.

This dialogue has occurred through a range of channels – a significant number of engagement projects; our Community Conversation program which has enabled us to connect closely with a number of our unique, smaller communities to better understand their needs; and through our Community Satisfaction Survey undertaken in March 2020.

We have spoken to our community about a wide range of important aspects of their lives, from housing to climate change, to cultural development and biodiversity.

We also know our community has experienced a number of significant events over the past few years, from devastating bushfires and fast-moving floods to a global pandemic. We have interacted extensively with disaster-impacted communities and know that new priorities have emerged, such as preparedness and resilience.

This information, along with targeted engagement during 2021, informed the review of our plan.

During this engagement we checked in on our community's key values to ensure they are still relevant, we confirmed what our community loves about the MidCoast, and we facilitated opportunities for people to tell us what they want for the future of our region.

While engagement opportunities were impacted by COVID restrictions, we heard from a broad cross section of our community, and feedback confirmed the vision and priority areas are relevant and supported. In particular the region's environmental and cultural significance, and the quality of life residents enjoy, were identified as having great importance.



# OUR COMMUNITY VALUES

Values describe what is important to us and how we would like to live as a community. What we value is important to the way we plan for our future. These are the values our community identified during consultations between 2016 and 2018.

## We value... our unique, diverse and culturally rich communities

Our diverse communities offer active and social opportunities, are safe and are places where we work together with a creative focus acknowledging our rich history and culture.

## We value... a connected community

We are socially and physically connected with each other, by ensuring we have activities, facilities, roads, footpaths and technology that are upgraded and well maintained.

## We value... our environment

Our natural environment is protected and enhanced, while we maintain our growing urban centres and manage our resources wisely.

## We value... our thriving and growing economy

We are a place where people want to live, work and play, business is resilient and adaptable to change by utilising knowledge and expertise that supports innovation.

## We value... strong leadership and shared vision

We work in partnerships towards a shared vision, that provides value for money and is community focused.





# STRATEGIC DIRECTION

## Our Community's Vision

The vision describes the kind of place the MidCoast community wants our region to be in the future:

**MidCoast is a place of unique environmental and cultural significance. Our strong community connection, coupled with our innovative development and growing economy, builds the quality of life we value.**

## Our Community Outcomes

The community outcomes are shaped by our community's values. The outcomes are the big picture results that we will keep in sight and focus on achieving.

The Integrated Planning and Reporting Framework requires that a Council's Community Strategic Plan addresses social, environmental, economic and civic leadership issues in an integrated and sustainable way. This is known as the 'quadruple bottom line' principle.

### Community Outcome 1: A resilient and socially connected community

Our diverse communities offer active and social opportunities for everyone; they are safe and are places where we work together with a creative focus acknowledging our rich history and culture.

### Community Outcome 2: An integrated and considered approach to managing our natural and built environments

Our natural environment is protected and enhanced, while we maintain our growing town centres and manage our resources wisely.

### Community Outcome 3: A thriving and strong economy

A strong regional economy that supports business and jobs growth.

### Community Outcome 4: Strong leadership and good governance

Council is focused on being sustainable, well-governed, and delivering the best outcomes for the community.



## Key terms – How to read the plan

**Community Outcomes:** The overarching goals to keep in sight. They are based on the quadruple bottom line: social, environment (both natural and built), economic and civic leadership.

**Strategic Objectives:** These are the long-term priorities that define what the community’s long-term vision will look like once it is achieved. The purpose is to answer the question ‘where does the community want to be in 10 years’ time?’

**Strategies:** These describe how the strategic objectives will be achieved. In other words, ‘How will we get there?’. These strategies are further expanded with specific and measurable actions, timeframes and responsibilities in the Delivery Program and Operational Plan.

**Council’s Role:** Because the Community Strategic Plan is a community plan, the services we rely on as a community are provided by many different players. These include State and Federal government agencies (eg for emergency services, hospitals and regional transport) as well as business and community groups. This column shows the role or roles that Council plays for each of the strategies.

These roles are:

Role	Description
<b>Advocate</b>	Council makes representations to State and Federal government, industry and other sectors to achieve the best possible outcomes for the MidCoast community.
<b>Capacity Builder</b>	Council works with community groups and agencies to become self-sufficient in order to meet local needs. Council mentor and/or assist community groups to obtain the necessary resources through partnerships with other agencies.
<b>Leader</b>	Council identifies key community issues and mobilises both local and external stakeholders to respond where appropriate. Council plans and provides direction through policy and practices.
<b>Partner</b>	Council supports and partners with the community, private and government organisations to deliver benefits to the community.
<b>Planner</b>	Council undertakes research, provides information, and consults with community stakeholders to develop and evaluate ways to resolve identified issues. This work is undertaken from a whole of community perspective.
<b>Provider</b>	Council provides infrastructure, services, facilities and programs that meet the needs of the community.
<b>Regulator</b>	Council undertakes mandatory inspections, provides enforcement or penalties for breaches of regulations.

**Who else has a role?** These are the Federal and State government agencies, other organisations and community groups that have an important role. It is important to have strong partnerships between these groups to achieve the strategic objectives.

# COMMUNITY OUTCOME 1: A RESILIENT AND SOCIALLY CONNECTED COMMUNITY

**Our diverse communities offer active and social opportunities for everyone; they are safe and are places where we work together with a creative focus acknowledging our rich history and culture.**

Our community values the friendly, quiet and relaxed lifestyle that our region offers. Living here provides a sense of belonging and connection with each other.

A wide range of safe, inclusive and accessible public places and spaces allows individuals, families and community groups to gather, supporting them to connect and encouraging healthy lifestyles and enjoyment of the natural world. These places and spaces include sport and recreation facilities, venues for the arts and creativity, and a range of other sites in our towns, villages and localities, each with their own unique histories and character.

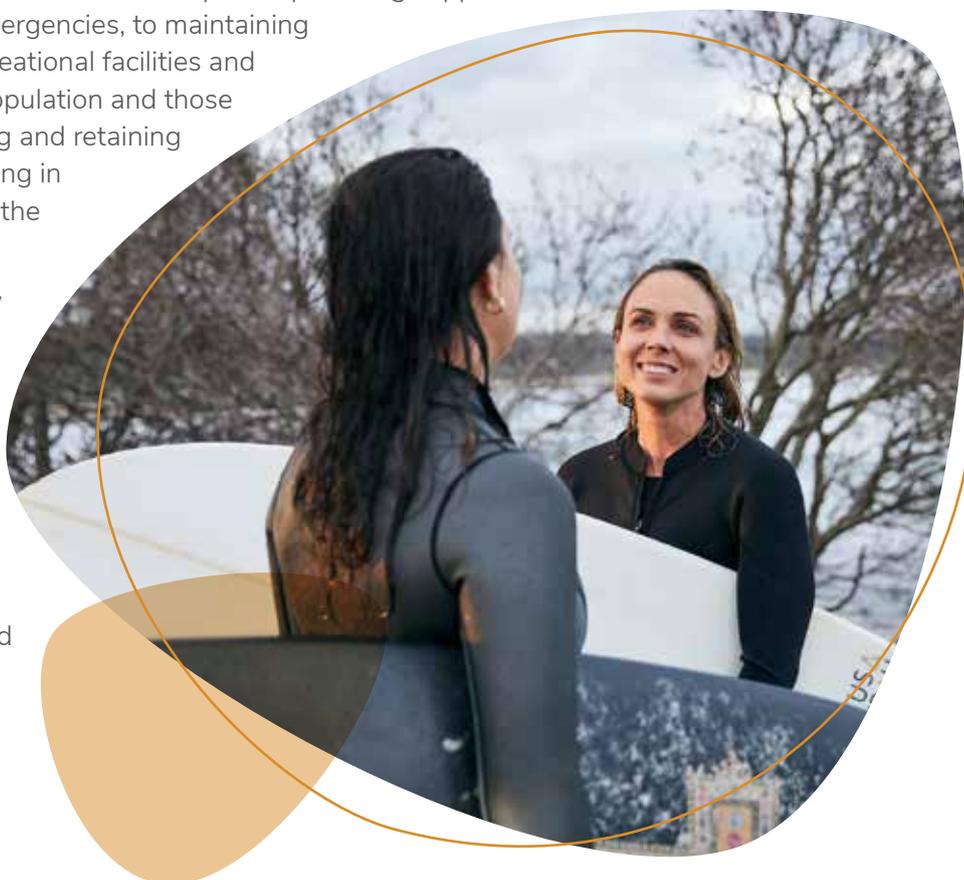
We value the diversity that different backgrounds, perspectives and cultures bring to the community and look for opportunities to enhance inclusiveness.

We acknowledge the Aboriginal culture that shapes our region, and work closely with the Aboriginal community and key stakeholders to develop strategies that empower, embrace and celebrate this culture through sharing of art, stories, history and places.

Valuing our diversity includes recognising, supporting and partnering with different groups in our community to create an inclusive and welcoming place. These groups include young people, those who require assistance in their day-to-day lives, and the increasing number of people from different cultural backgrounds moving into our community to fill skills gaps or start new businesses.

Volunteers play many key roles in our community, from providing support during natural disasters and emergencies, to maintaining our natural landscapes, our recreational facilities and providing care for our ageing population and those living with a disability. Attracting and retaining volunteers has proved challenging in recent times with the impact of the COVID pandemic.

Natural disasters of the last few years and the pandemic have challenged our wellbeing as a community, highlighting the importance of public health and safety. Being prepared for emergencies is now increasingly crucial and includes providing resilient infrastructure that will withstand environmental challenges.



<b>Strategic Objective</b> Where do we want to be?	<b>Strategies</b> How will we get there?	<b>Council Role</b>	<b>Who else has a role?</b>
1.1 We celebrate our history, culture, creativity and diversity	1.1.1 Celebrate, acknowledge and empower our local Aboriginal heritage through sharing of art, stories, history and places	Capacity Builder Leader Partner Planner Provider	Local Aboriginal groups and artists, community members, TIDE
	1.1.2 Foster a welcoming community where everyone feels included and where cultural diversity is appreciated and valued	Capacity Builder Provider Leader	Manning Valley Neighbourhood Services/Migrant Settlement Service, Dept of Home Affairs, Multicultural NSW, community organisations, arts sector, business, community members
	1.1.3 Encourage community connection by supporting and delivering a diverse range of cultural, creative and community programs and events	Capacity Builder Leader Partner Planner Provider	Local and touring artists, community arts groups, local music venues, local markets, festivals, event organisers, Create NSW, Arts Mid North Coast, Regional Arts NSW, sporting and other clubs
	1.1.4 Celebrate and preserve the unique and distinctive character, history and cultural heritage of our towns, villages and significant places	Planner Partner Provider	Historical societies and museums, tourism operators, accommodation providers, volunteers, residents, businesses, heritage conservation groups, heritage reference groups, First Nations community members
1.2 We have access to a wide range of services and activities that contribute to the wellbeing of all members of our community	1.2.1 Provide accessible and safe local community spaces and facilities	Provider Advocate	Historical societies and museums, tourism operators, accommodation providers, volunteers, residents, businesses, National Parks, Crown Lands
	1.2.2 Deliver services and facilities to support the ageing population and people with disabilities	Provider Partner Advocate	YMCA, PCYC, Australian Lifeguard Services, private gyms, sporting clubs, advocacy groups, community organisations, disability sector service providers, men's sheds, Dept of Health
	1.2.3 Strengthen the capacity of our young people to participate and thrive in community life	Advocate Capacity Builder Partner Planner Provider	Dept of Communities and Justice, youth sector service providers, schools, community organisations, community groups, sporting groups, mental health organisations, Taree Universities Campus
	1.2.4 Provide learning hubs to support learning opportunities	Provider Partner Planner Capacity Builder	Education institutions, Dept of Community Services, men's sheds, NSW Public Libraries Association, local Aboriginal groups
	1.2.5 Advocate for regional health services to meet demand	Advocate Plan	Manning Great Lakes Community Health Action Group, Australian Medical Association, Hunter New England Health

<b>Strategic Objective</b> Where do we want to be?	<b>Strategies</b> How will we get there?	<b>Council Role</b>	<b>Who else has a role?</b>
1.3 We work towards being a sustainable, resilient and socially connected community	1.3.1 Encourage and support volunteering to enable community participation opportunities	Capacity Builder Provider	RFS, SES, community organisations, Bushfire Management Committee, sporting groups, Surf Life Saving clubs
	1.3.2 Support communities to identify priorities to ensure they are sustainable into the future	Capacity Builder Planner	Community groups, residents, local businesses, Dept of Communities and Justice, service providers, Resilience NSW, Services NSW, Dept of Primary Industries, MidCoast Business Chambers of Commerce
	1.3.3 Strengthen social connectedness through programs and partnerships with community groups, government agencies and other service providers	Advocate Capacity Builder Leader Partner Planner	Neighbourhood centres, police, education department, schools, Dept of Communities and Justice, Resilience NSW, Services NSW, Dept of Primary Industries, Hunter New England Health, Mental Health Services, MidCoast Business Chambers of Commerce, State Library of NSW, TAFE NSW, Taree Universities Campus, organisations that provide social support
	1.3.4 Support individuals, families and communities to prepare, respond and recover from natural disasters or emergency events	Provider Capacity Builder Planner	RFS, Fire & Rescue, SES, Police, Resilience NSW, Local Land Services (NSW); Red Cross, Health service providers including Hunter New England Health and Mental Health Services, Bushfire Management Committee
1.4 We protect the health and safety of our communities	1.4.1 Uphold public health and safety standards and increase the capacity of our community to understand and meet them	Provider Regulator	Local businesses (hairdressers, skin penetration - beauticians, food premises, brothels, community organisations, NSW Health, Office of Local Government, Dept of Planning and Environment (Companion Animal), Manning Valley Liquor Consultative Committee
	1.4.2 Provide safe and sustainable networks of water, sewer and stormwater systems to meet community needs and health and safety standards	Provider Regulator	NSW Dept of Industry and Environment (Office of Water), NSW Health, NSW EPA, NSW Water Directorate
	1.4.3 Encourage physical health and fitness and social connectedness by providing safe and appropriate recreational facilities	Partner Provider	NSW Sport and Recreation, The Y, PCYC, private gyms, sporting and other clubs, community groups and residents, National Parks, Crown Lands

## COMMUNITY OUTCOME 2: AN INTEGRATED AND CONSIDERED APPROACH TO MANAGING OUR NATURAL AND BUILT ENVIRONMENTS

**Our natural environment is protected and enhanced, while we maintain our growing town centres and manage our resources wisely.**

We value our natural environment and are committed to its protection, maintenance and rehabilitation. Healthy catchments and waterways are vital systems that keep our communities and local economy thriving. We balance environmental needs with sustainable infrastructure and development by taking a considered approach in our planning, and inviting our community to partner with us in taking a hands-on approach to environmental education and conservation of our native flora and fauna.

We take a proactive approach to ensure development satisfies our future needs and is appropriate for the community. Currently, there is a sustained high level of building and development activity which requires us to balance the social and economic needs of present and future generations with sustainable infrastructure and development while protecting the environment. This is particularly relevant with climate change now a pressing challenge experienced first-hand in our area in recent years.

Catastrophic bushfires and an increased number of intense storm events have led to coastal erosion and flooding and has resulted in a significant loss of biodiversity, life and property. Continuing to provide water and sewer services during major events such as bushfire, storms, droughts, pandemics and other natural disasters is an ongoing challenge.

We are committed to adapting our practices and infrastructure to become more resilient to the impacts of climate change.

Our region faces many other challenges, including: managing standards and customer expectations in relation to Council processing times in a highly regulated environment; constructing, maintaining and operating new infrastructure that is required to support development within existing budgets; addressing the current housing shortage as well as the need for a broad range of housing options to accommodate our diverse community; and meeting carbon and greenhouse gas emission reduction targets but still maintaining the levels of service within budget allocations.



Strategic Objective Where do we want to be?	Strategies How will we get there?	Council Role	Who else has a role?
2.1 We protect, manage and restore our natural environment and our biodiversity	2.1.1 Protect, maintain and rehabilitate natural areas	Provider Planner Partner Advocate Regulator	NSW Department of Planning and Environment, NSW National Parks and Wildlife Service, Hunter Regional Weeds Committee, Hunter Local Land Services, MidCoast 2 Tops Landcare Connections, Manning Coastcare, Dunecare, landowners, visitors, community members
	2.1.2 Encourage community involvement to care for our natural environment	Capacity Builder Leader Partner	MidCoast 2 Tops Landcare Connections, Manning Coastcare, Volunteers, Department of Education, schools
	2.1.3 Improve and maintain water quality for our beaches, lakes and waterways	Provider Capacity Builder Leader Partner	Environment Protection Authority (EPA), Hunter Local Land Services, Department of Planning and Environment, Manning Landcare, Manning Coastcare, Dunecare, NSW Fisheries, oyster farmers, commercial and recreation fishing community, farmers, industry and community members
2.2 We understand and manage environment and climate change risks and impacts	2.2.1 Promote understanding of place-based risks and vulnerabilities and develop resilience and adaptation plans	Provider Planner Advocate	SES, residents and rate payers, Resilience NSW, Fire Management
	2.2.2 Climate change risk management planning and adaptation frameworks are applied in development proposals, infrastructure planning and land use planning	Provider Leader	NSW Department of Planning and Environment, residents and rate payers
2.3 Council works towards net zero emissions	2.3.1 Incorporate renewable energy and energy efficiency in future design and planning	Provider Planner Regulator	NSW Department of Planning and Environment
	2.3.2 Promote energy and resource efficiency initiatives to our community	Capacity builder Leader Planner	Essential Energy, NSW Government, community organisations, residents, businesses, Energise Gloucester
	2.3.3 Invest in renewable energy efficient measures, power purchasing agreements and Carbon sequestration <sup>2</sup>	Capacity builder Leader	Residents, businesses, community organisations
	2.3.4 Minimise waste through education, reduction, reuse, recycling and repurposing	Provider Capacity builder Leader	Residents, businesses, visitors

<b>Strategic Objective</b> Where do we want to be?	<b>Strategies</b> How will we get there?	<b>Council Role</b>	<b>Who else has a role?</b>
2.4 We have an adequate and reliable water supply	2.4.1 Manage all elements of the water cycle to deliver an adequate and reliable water supply that meets community needs now and into the future	Provider Planner	NSW Department of Planning and Environment
2.5 We balance the needs of our natural and built environment	2.5.1 Practice integrated land use planning that balances the environmental, social and economic needs of present and future generations and our existing natural, heritage and cultural assets	Planner	NSW Department of Planning and Environment, Heritage NSW, Joint Regional Planning Panels
	2.5.2 Plan, provide, manage and advocate for infrastructure that continues to meet the needs of our community	Provider Planner Advocate	NSW Department of Planning Development and Construction Sector
2.6 We have a diverse range of housing options	2.6.1 Plan and advocate for a range of housing options to meet the diverse needs of our community	Advocate Planner	Residents, Development Sector, Community Housing providers



# COMMUNITY OUTCOME 3: A THRIVING AND STRONG ECONOMY

## A strong regional economy that supports business and jobs growth.

Our regional economy has an annual gross regional product of \$4.78 billion with approximately 34,900 of our residents currently in work. High employment industries include healthcare and social assistance, followed by retail trade, accommodation, food services, and construction. Industries such as agriculture, forestry, fishing and manufacturing also employ a significant number of people in the region.

Our economy is supported by tourists, visitors and those migrating to our area, and we promote our region to maximise the value of current and emerging opportunities. Improvements to our towns and villages are important to attract visitors, encourage businesses and attract significant events.

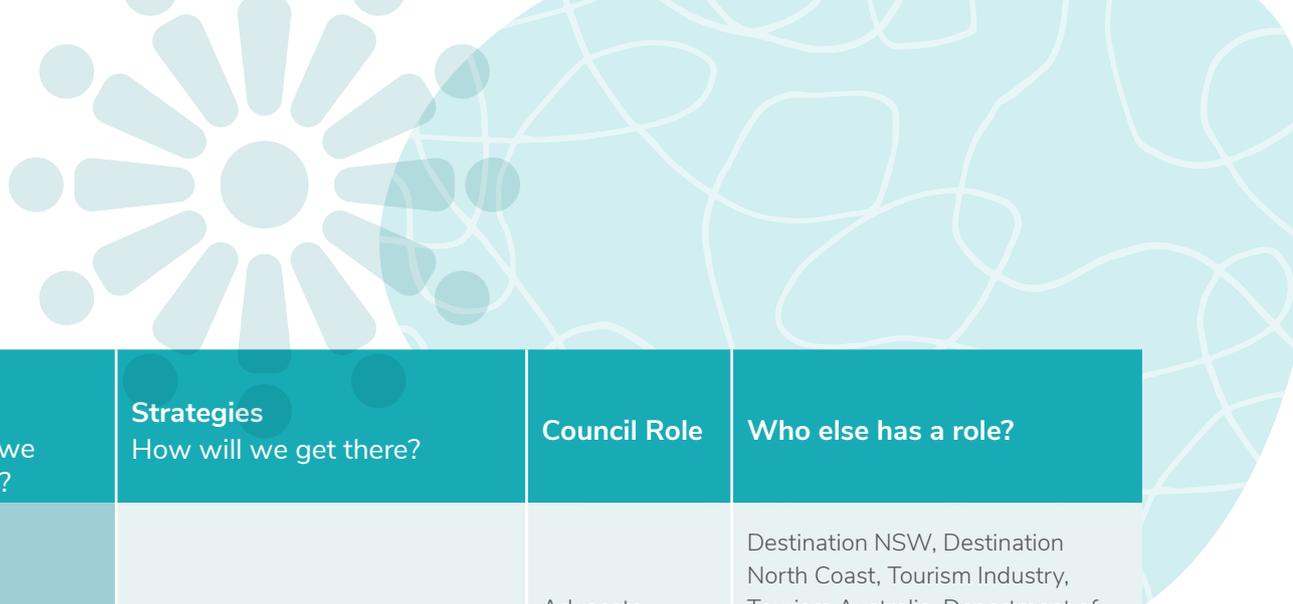
Our businesses have shown that they are resilient, innovative and adaptable, particularly in response to the changes brought by the COVID-19 pandemic, the natural disasters that have impacted our region as well as rapidly changing technologies.

The population of our region is widespread, with more residents migrating to hinterland areas as new residents relocate to the area. It is important to our community to support economic development and education opportunities and to have roads, bridges and pathways that connect us. Our widespread population presents unique challenges in how our infrastructure is constructed and maintained.

Our community faces many challenges including a high unemployment rate (7.3% compared to rates of 5.9% in regional NSW, 6.3% across NSW, and 6.4% across Australia) while at the same time we experience significant shortages of skilled labour and difficulties attracting skilled staff. We also lack local education and training opportunities.

Other challenges include the impact of tourism and population growth on natural and cultural assets; the need to balance the construction and maintenance of our road network with the expectations of our community; and the increasing maintenance and repair costs to infrastructure and natural assets as a result of the impacts of climate change.





<b>Strategic Objective</b> Where do we want to be?	<b>Strategies</b> How will we get there?	<b>Council Role</b>	<b>Who else has a role?</b>
3.1 MidCoast is a great place to visit, work and invest	3.1.1 Identify and harness opportunities for businesses and economic development	Advocate Planner Capacity Builder Provider	Destination NSW, Destination North Coast, Tourism Industry, Tourism Australia, Department of Regional NSW, MidCoast Business Chambers of Commerce, Aboriginal Development Organisations, Agribusiness, Farmers for Climate Change
	3.1.2 Advocate for and encourage local education and vocational training to cover skill and employment gaps	Advocate	Local universities, registered training providers, NSW Department of Education, MidCoast Business Chambers of Commerce, high schools, Taree Universities Campus, Department of Education, Skills and Employment
	3.1.3 Advocate for improved telecommunications and utilities to provide consistency across the region	Advocate	NBN, telecommunications and utility providers, residents, Department of Infrastructure, Transport, Regional Development and Communications, MidCoast Business Chambers of Commerce
	3.1.4 Support and encourage the development and attraction of strategic events	Advocate	Community groups, sporting clubs, MidCoast Business Chambers of Commerce, Destination NSW
3.2 Our villages and business precincts are vibrant commercial spaces	3.2.1 Implement innovative programs and projects to support business precincts in creating and maintaining vibrant spaces	Advocate Planner Capacity Builder	MidCoast Business Chambers of Commerce, local business and commercial property owners, local artists, Department of Planning and Environment
3.3 Our integrated transport networks meet the needs of our businesses and the community	3.3.1 Plan, provide and advocate for safe and efficient regional transport networks	Provider Advocate Planner	Transport NSW, Department of Infrastructure, Federal Transport, Regional Development and Communications
	3.3.2 Design, construct and maintain safe and efficient local transport and mobility networks	Provider Advocate Planner	Federal Department of Infrastructure, Transport, Regional Development and Communications, Transport NSW

## COMMUNITY OUTCOME 4: STRONG LEADERSHIP AND GOOD GOVERNANCE

**Council is focused on being sustainable, well governed and delivering the best outcomes for the community.**

We strive to be a responsive and reliable service provider by making sound, ethical, evidence-based decisions that support the needs of our community. Defining and reviewing our service levels, and implementing innovative business improvements, helps us to deliver what our community needs in a sustainable way. In addition, advocating and partnering with other government agencies is important to support the services that our community needs, such as health and education.

Good governance and financial management in a highly regulated, changing legislative environment presents challenges but also helps us to be clear and accountable.

It is important to our community to have opportunities to engage and communicate with Council about their needs, concerns and priorities, and see these reflected in Council decisions. The variety of communication methods and preferences, as well as the growth of social media and online engagement in an increasingly digital world, present challenges but also opportunities in the ways our community can have their say.

Clear, transparent and meaningful communication enables our community to contribute to and understand our plans, decisions and actions. We use feedback from all groups in our community to drive our strategic initiatives and help us to balance community expectations with the cost of delivery.



Strategic Objective Where do we want to be?	Strategies How will we get there?	Council Role	Who else has a role?
4.1 The Community has confidence in Council decisions and planning for the future	4.1.1 Enable the community to participate in decisions that affect them	Provider Capacity Builder	Residents, schools, service providers, community organisations
	4.1.2 Provide clear, accessible, timely and relevant information to the community about council projects and services	Provider Leader	Media outlets, government agencies, community organisations
4.2 Council demonstrates good governance and financial management to ensure decisions and transactions are ethical, efficient, safe and fair	4.2.1 Use governance frameworks and processes to guide our decisions and to ensure council is accountable to the community	Provider	NSW Office of Local Government, NSW Audit Office, Internal Auditors, Information Privacy Commission, Audit, Risk and Improvement, Committee
	4.2.2 Use business improvement, project management and risk management methodologies to ensure best outcomes	Planner Provider	NSW Office of Local Government, NSW Audit Office, Internal Auditors, Information Privacy Commission, Audit, Risk and Improvement, Committee
	4.2.3 Council manages our services and infrastructure in a sustainable manner to balance community need and expectations	Planner Provider	NSW Office of Local Government, NSW Audit Office
4.3 Council builds a healthy and community-focused culture that contributes to our success	4.3.1 Develop and grow a skilled, motivated, accountable and a 'high-performing' workforce	Provider Partner	Education & Training Sector, contracted service providers
	4.3.2 Provide a safe, accessible, fair and equitable work environment	Provider	SafeWork NSW, Unions
	4.3.3 Provide the community with an accessible, responsive and efficient customer experience	Provider Partner	Service NSW, Services Australia
4.4 We encourage community and civic leadership	4.4.1 Inform, educate and empower community groups and leaders to respond and adapt to challenges and change	Capacity Builder Leader Planner	Service organisations, councillors and council committee members, Rotary and Lions Clubs, Local MPs
	4.4.2 Identify and participate in initiatives for regional cooperation and collaboration	Advocate Partner Capacity Builder	Hunter Joint Organisation, Department of Primary Industry, NSW Department of Planning and Environment, Community organisations, residents, Arts MidNorth Coast, MidCoast Waste, NSW Environment Protection Authority

# TRACKING OUR PROGRESS

The Community Strategic Plan sets out where the community would like to be in the future and what Council, our partners and the community will work together to achieve over the next 10 years.

We use a broad range of performance measures to track our progress towards achieving the strategic objectives in the Community Strategic Plan. Progress on these measures will be reported in the State of MidCoast report at the start of the term of each new Council. How we track our progress on Council services and projects can be found in the four-year Delivery Program and one-year Operational Plan which can be found on our website.



# PERFORMANCE MEASURES

## COMMUNITY OUTCOME 1: A RESILIENT AND SOCIALLY CONNECTED COMMUNITY

Our diverse communities offer active and social opportunities for everyone; are safe and are places where we work together with a creative focus acknowledging our rich history and culture

Strategic Objectives	Performance Indicator / measure	Source	Baseline	Target
<b>1.1</b> We celebrate our history, culture, creativity and diversity	The MidCoast community is harmonious, cohesive and inclusive	MidCoast Community Satisfaction Survey	46% of residents agree	Increase
	There is a good range of opportunities for cultural and artistic activities and expression	MidCoast Community Satisfaction Survey	54% of residents agree	Increase
	Community satisfaction rate for festival and events programs	MidCoast Community Satisfaction Survey	85%	Maintain
	Community satisfaction rate with heritage sites protected and maintained	MidCoast Community Satisfaction Survey	86%	Maintain
<b>1.2</b> We have access to a wide range of services and activities that contribute to the well-being of all members of our community	There is a good range of leisure and recreation opportunities	MidCoast Community Satisfaction Survey	66% of residents agree	Increase
	Community satisfaction rate for with youth activities	MidCoast Community Satisfaction Survey	72 %	Maintain
	Community satisfaction rate for with library services	MidCoast Community Satisfaction Survey	97%	Maintain
	People have fair opportunity to participate in community life	MidCoast Community Satisfaction Survey	67% of residents agree	Increase

<b>1.3</b> We work towards being a sustainable, resilient and socially connected community	There is a good range of community groups and support networks for residents	MidCoast Community Satisfaction Survey	66% of residents agree	Increase
	Living in the LGA gives you a sense of living in a community	MidCoast Community Satisfaction Survey	68% of residents agree	Increase
	Community satisfaction rate with Emergency Management	MidCoast Community Satisfaction Survey	88%	Maintain
<b>1.4</b> We protect the health and safety of our communities	Meeting Australian Drinking Water Guidelines	MidCoast Council Water Management and Treatment	Microbiological >99% Physical >99% Chemical >95%	Maintain
	Community satisfaction rate with sewerage services	MidCoast Community Satisfaction Survey	92%	Maintain
	Community satisfaction rate with stormwater drainage	MidCoast Community Satisfaction Survey	74%	Maintain
	Residents feel safe using public facilities	MidCoast Community Satisfaction Survey	68% of residents agree	Increase
	Community satisfaction rate with Water Quality	MidCoast Community Satisfaction Survey	89%	Maintain
	Sporting facilities in the area meet our needs	MidCoast Community Satisfaction Survey	70% of residents agree	Maintain

# COMMUNITY OUTCOME 2: AN INTEGRATED AND CONSIDERED APPROACH TO MANAGING OUR NATURAL AND BUILT ENVIRONMENTS

Our natural environment is protected and enhanced, while we maintain our growing town centres and manage our resources wisely

Strategic Objectives	Performance Indicator / measure	Source	Baseline	Target
<b>2.1</b> We protect, manage and restore our natural environment and our biodiversity	Waterway report card scores	MidCoast Annual waterway report card <sup>1</sup>	Charlotte Bay A Smiths Lake A Myall Lakes A Pipers Creek A Wallis Lake A Dawson River B Estuary The Branch B Estuary Karuah B Estuary Lower Myall B Estuary Bombah B Broadwater Mid Manning B Estuary Lower Manning B Estuary Farquhar Inlet B Mid B Wallamba Estuary	Maintain or Improve

1 Water report card legend

Grade	Result	Definition	Description
A	Excellent	All environmental values met. (The indicators measured meet all of trigger values for almost all of the year.)	The best 20% of scores in the state
B	Good	Most environmental values met. (The indicators measured meet all of trigger values for most of the year)	Next best 30% of good scores
C	Fair	Some environmental values met. (The indicators measured meet some of trigger values for some of the year.)	Middle 30 % of scores
D	Poor	Few environmental values met. (The indicators measured meet few of trigger values for some of the year.)	Next 15% of poorer scores
F	Very Poor	None of the environmental values met. (The indicators measured meet none of the trigger values for almost all of the year.)	The worst 5% of scores in the State

			Coolongolook Estuary Wallamba Cove Upper Manning Estuary Khappinghat Estuary	B C C C	
	Threatened species status in MidCoast	Fisheries Management Act, Biodiversity Conservation Act, Federal Environmental Protection Biodiversity Conservation Act schedules	Plants Mammals Frogs Reptiles Sea turtles Birds Insects Fish	4 3 3 0 8 2 3 5 2 1 5	Maintain <sup>2</sup>
<b>2.2</b> We understand and manage environment and climate change risks and impacts	Community satisfaction rate with Climate change	MidCoast Community Satisfaction Survey	62%		Increase
<b>2.3</b> Council works towards net zero emissions	Recycling bins contamination rate of yellow recycling bins that are contamination with non-recyclable material	Waste Audit Report 2021	11%		Decrease
	Red waste bin recycling or organic material of red recycling bins that include organic or recycling material (materials that could have been diverted)	Waste Audit Report 2021	15% (12% recycling material, 3% organic material)		10-11%
	Waste diverted from landfill	Waste Audit Report 2021	37.4 % per capita		Increase
	Dwellings with Solar Panels in MidCoast	Australian Bureau of Statistics at Australian Photovoltaic Institute Mapping Australian Photovoltaic installations (apvi.org.au)	35.3%		Increase

<sup>2</sup>. A decrease could indicate that either species have become are no longer threatened or are extinct.

<b>2.3</b> cont'd	CO <sub>2</sub> emissions from Council's fleet (light commercial vehicles, passenger vehicles and trucks)	Vehicle manufacturer specifications and fleet asset data in Council's enterprise management system	New	A target will be set once we have a baseline
<b>2.4</b> We have an adequate and reliable water supply	Water consumption does not exceed water production	MidCoast Council Water Services	100%	Maintain
	Community satisfaction rate for Water service	MidCoast Community Satisfaction Survey	80%	Increase
<b>2.5</b> We balance the needs of our natural and built environment	Council's planning and leadership are contributing to a sustainable environment in the MidCoast LGA	MidCoast Community Satisfaction Survey	28% of residents agree	Increase
<b>2.6</b> We have a diverse range of housing options	Community satisfaction rate with residential development	MidCoast Community Satisfaction Survey	79%	Maintain
	Residents feel able to afford a reasonable standard of housing in this area	MidCoast Community Satisfaction Survey	67%	Increase
	Dwellings in MidCoast region	Australian Bureau of Statistics, Census of Population and Housing 2016 via idcommunity Housing Monitor for MidCoast Council	Separate house - 36,923 Medium density - 7,006 High density - 1,790 Medium density = townhouses and 1-2 storey flats and units High density = 3+ storey flats, units and apartments	Increase

# COMMUNITY OUTCOME 3: A THRIVING AND STRONG ECONOMY

A strong regional economy that supports business and jobs growth

Strategic Objectives	Performance Indicator / measure	Source	Baseline	Target
<b>3.1</b> MidCoast is a great place to visit, work and invest	Planning for local economic growth and development is adequate	MidCoast Community Satisfaction Survey	35% of residents agree	Increase
	Community satisfaction rate with Economic development	MidCoast Community Satisfaction Survey	64%	Increase
	Community satisfaction rate for support for local business	MidCoast Community Satisfaction Survey	70%	Increase
	Gross Domestic Regional Product	NIEIR (National Institute of Economic and Industry Research Pty Ltd) 2021 via .idcommunity Economic Profile for MidCoast Council	\$3.43 billion <sup>3</sup>	Maintain or increase
	Gross Domestic Regional Product per capita	NIEIR (National Institute of Economic and Industry Research Pty Ltd) Australia Bureau of Statistics via .idcommunity for MidCoast Council	\$36,026	Maintain or increase
	Local jobs	Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS) 2021 via .idcommunity Economic Profile for MidCoast Council	30,250	Maintain or increase
	Persons aged 15+ with University Qualifications	Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS) 2021 Census of Population and Housing via .idcommunity for MidCoast Council	11%	Increase

<sup>3</sup> Represents 0.54% of the state's Gross State Product

<b>3.1</b> cont'd	Persons aged 15+ with trade qualifications (certificate)	Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS) 2021 Census of Population and Housing via .idcommunity for MidCoast Council	24%	Increase
	Local business	Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS) 2021 via .idcommunity Economic Profile for MidCoast Council	6,951	Maintain or increase
	Visitation rate	Tourism Research Australia Local Government Area Profiles 2020	2.18M	Maintain
	Total visitors spend	Tourism Research Australia Local Government Area Profiles 2020	\$612M	Increase by 4%
	Average overnight visitors spend	Tourism Research Australia Local Government Area Profiles 2020	\$453	Increase by 1.5%
	NBN coverage in MidCoast	nbn™ rollout map   nbn (nbnco.com.au)	Hawks Nest, Tea Gardens, Karuah and Stroud currently do not have NBN coverage	NBN coverage in Hawks Nest, Tea Gardens, Karuah and Stroud
<b>3.2</b> Our villages and business precincts are dynamic commercial spaces	Shops and services in shopping areas meet residents' needs	MidCoast Community Satisfaction Survey	66% of residents agree	Increase
<b>3.3</b> Our integrated transport networks meet the needs of our businesses and the community	Community satisfaction with local roads	MidCoast Community Satisfaction Survey	43%	Increase
	Community satisfaction with road safety	MidCoast Community Satisfaction Survey	85%	Maintain
	Community satisfaction for with maintaining local bridges	MidCoast Community Satisfaction Survey	75%	Maintain
	Community satisfaction with maintaining footpaths	MidCoast Community Satisfaction Survey	61%	Increase
	Public transport is adequate for your needs	MidCoast Community Satisfaction Survey	39% of residents agree	Increase

# COMMUNITY OUTCOME 4: STRONG LEADERSHIP AND GOOD GOVERNANCE

Council is focused on being sustainable, well governed and delivering the best outcomes for the community

Strategic Objectives	Performance Indicator / measure	Source	Baseline	Target
<b>4.1</b> The community has confidence in Council decisions and planning for the future	Community satisfaction with engaging the community in planning	MidCoast Community Satisfaction Survey	60%	Increase
	Council plans well to help secure the community's long-term future	MidCoast Community Satisfaction Survey	28% of residents agree	Increase
	Community satisfaction with long-term planning for the MidCoast Local Government Area	MidCoast Community Satisfaction Survey	71%	Increase
	Community satisfaction with provision of Council information to the community	MidCoast Community Satisfaction Survey	60%	Increase
<b>4.2</b> Council demonstrates good governance and financial management to ensure decisions and transactions are ethical, efficient, safe and fair	Operating performance ratio	MidCoast Council Annual Financial Statements	-5.00%	>0.00%
	Debt service cover ratio	MidCoast Council Annual Financial Statements	1.77x	>2.00x
	Infrastructure backlog ratio	MidCoast Council Annual Financial Statements	4.01%	<2.00%
	Building and infrastructure renewal ratio	MidCoast Council Annual Financial Statements	94.46%	≥100.00%
	Community satisfaction with financial management	MidCoast Community Satisfaction Survey	63%	Increase

<b>4.3</b> Council builds a healthy and community-focussed culture that contributes to our success	Workforce turnover rates (excluding fixed term contract employees)	MidCoast Council Payroll system	12.3%	10–12%
	Unplanned absences (days/FTE)	MidCoast Council Payroll system	8.24 days <sup>4</sup>	Decrease
	Lost time injuries rate	StateCover Report	0.62 claims per \$1M of wages <sup>4</sup>	Maintain
	Community satisfaction with the ease in which they were able to contact Council	MidCoast Community Satisfaction Survey	New	A target will be set once we have a baseline
	Community Satisfaction overall with the way their contact with a Council officer was handled	MidCoast Community Satisfaction Survey	New	A target will be set once we have a baseline
<b>4.4</b> We encourage community and civic leadership	Community satisfaction with support for community groups	MidCoast Community Satisfaction Survey	83%	Increase

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<sup>4</sup> This figure is lower than the state average or average for same size council.



**MIDCOAST**  
council

Yalawanyi Ganya  
2 Biripi Way  
PO Box 482  
Taree 2430  
Mon-Fri 8.30am - 4.30pm  
Tel: (02) 7955 7777