

ZONING IN ON WATERWAYS

The MidCoast offers waterway systems with abundant recreational and employment opportunities in addition to some high-quality protected areas.

Development in the MidCoast is currently guided by three different planning frameworks, which is why we're working to develop a consistent, region-wide framework. The Rural Strategy is one of the key elements required in developing the new Local Environmental Plan and Development Control Plan.

The draft Rural Strategy proposes a new framework for our waterways, rural and environmental lands, which cover around 95% of the MidCoast. These areas contain a diverse range of resources and amenities that underpin our lifestyle and livelihoods and are increasingly sought out for business, recreational and tourism uses.

LOOKING AFTER OUR WATERWAYS

The MidCoast is characterised by pristine waterways, striking scenery and an abundance of natural features. Our waterways play an integral role not only in our region's environmental health but also its economic, cultural and social wellbeing.

Waterways throughout the MidCoast are generally zoned to match their current level of use and environmental importance. In order to provide clear and consistent controls over these areas, it is proposed that three zones are applied to our rivers, lakes and other waterbodies only to their tidal extent. The three zones are Natural, Recreational and Working Waterways.

Outside of the tidal zone, areas containing waterways will be zoned for rural or environmental purposes, to match their adjacent zone.

Key changes include:

- recognition of both Cape Hawke Harbour and Crowdy Head Harbour in the Working Waterways zone, reflecting the commercial operations occurring in and adjacent to these waterways; and
- identifying Smiths Lake as a significant Natural Waterway, being within the Port Stephens-Great Lakes Marine Park and requiring a high level of monitoring and management of its entrance to the ocean.

To cater for increasing recreational demands and employment opportunities provided by our waterways, more flexibility will be applied to land uses allowed in these zones, and on adjoining waterfront land in a commercial, industrial or recreation zone.



LOOKING AFTER OUR WATERWAYS

When are the waterways zones used?

W1 Natural Waterways

This zone will apply exclusively to the unique waterway of Smiths Lake. Smiths Lake is our only Intermittently Closed and Open Lakes and Lagoons (ICOLL) system which requires sensitive and ongoing management and monitoring to ensure its ongoing health and sustainability.

W2 Recreational Waterways

This zone will apply to all waterways outside of the National Parks system that are not in the W1 or W3 zones. These waterways and systems support a diverse range of recreation activities, but also development associated with commercial tourism, fishing, oyster and aquaculture industries.

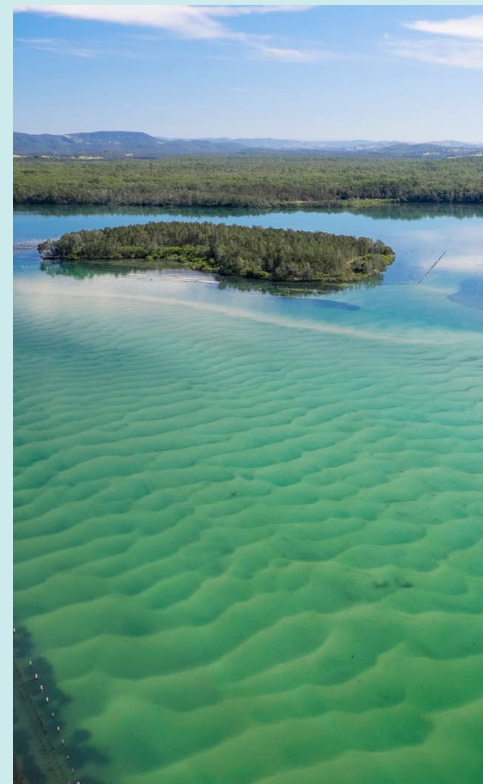
W3 Working Waterways

This zone will apply to both the Crowdy Head and Cape Hawke harbours in recognition of the commercial operations in and adjacent to these waterways.

What land should be in a waterways zone?

Waterways are important to the MidCoast community for social, economic, cultural and environmental reasons. They provide excellent tourism, recreational and fishing opportunities while supporting the world renowned Sydney Rock Oyster industry.

The range of water-based activities in any of these zones can only be undertaken with appropriate land-based services and facilities and these will also be accommodated by expanded commercial, industrial and recreation land use zones.



Zoning in on our future

We're zoning in on the zones used across the MidCoast to develop a clear, consistent planning framework. It will guide the way we manage land use across the entire region.

The Rural Strategy is part of this overarching project and reviews our waterways, rural and environmental lands, which cover around 95% of the MidCoast. Find out more: haveyoursay.midcoast.nsw.gov.au