



MIDCOAST
council



GLOUCESTER

LOCAL COMMUNITY PLAN

ENGAGEMENT OUTCOMES REPORT

August 2019 - October 2021

Contents

Introduction	4
Stage One	4
Think tank	4
Call for nominees for steering group	9
Determination of steering group representatives	9
Training session	9
Stage Two	10
Gathering information	10
Drafting the Plan	10
Stage Three	11
Reviewing the plan	11
Checking in with the community	11
What the community said	12
Revising the plan	16
Appendix	17

Our mission

We deliver benefits for our community in a way that adds value and builds trust

Our engagement principles

Timely	Early in the project timeline prior to key decisions being made
Accessible	Open and available with strategies in place to reach across the community
Broad	Strategies for ensuring representation from across the entire community
Accurate	Feedback collected, interpreted correctly and reported clearly
Meaningful	It is clear how input has contributed to decision making
Transparent	Community understands the process and sees how their input is used
Genuine	The input sought has a purpose and is used to inform decisions
Responsive	Community dialogue continues throughout the process, to outcome

Introduction

Local community planning is an opportunity for people within a community to come together, have a conversation about what they want for the future and develop a plan for how they will get there.

The Gloucester local community plan has been developed by the Gloucester community with the support of the MidCoast Local Community Planning Framework.

Early in the process a community steering group was established to guide the development of the Gloucester community plan.

This report provides a summary of the support provided by Council's engagement team to help Gloucester deliver a local community plan during the period August 2019 – October 2021.

Stage one – community input

Think tank

The first step in the development of a Local Community Plan for Gloucester was to hold several think tank sessions. These sessions were open to the entire community and advertised and promoted in the following ways:

Media release	28 August 2019 (picked up in Gloucester Advocate on 11 September) 12 September 2019 – 2RE mentioned it on 18 September
Facebook	3 September 2019 (Wingham & Gloucester) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 4,061 reached • 361 engagements • 1 comment • 15 shares 23 September 2019 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 2,107 reached • 125 engagements • 7 comments • 6 shares
Weekly News	4 September 2019 (Gloucester Advocate) 11 September 2019 (GA) 18 September 2019 (GA)
News briefs	Sent 30 August 2019 Sent 6 September Sent 13 September Sent 20 September
Delivery	Posters and postcards delivered to local businesses in CBD area
Direct mail	Email invitation to all addresses on the Gloucester database collated by Engagement team



The think tank sessions were held at Gloucester Council Chambers on

- Thursday 24 September 2019 at 10am – 12pm
- Thursday 24 September 2019 at 6pm – 8pm

There was attendance of approximately 50 people over both sessions. The day session saw three high school children participate and over 30 forms answering the questions from the think tank returned from high school children participating.

The think tank session covered the following:

What do you love about where you live?

Displayed were large images of iconic locations of Gloucester and the participants could write on a post it note and stick it to the image.

Gloucester said that they loved where they live because;

1. Community

- Sense of belonging
- Small town feeling
- Caring community that celebrates together and supports everyone
- Diversity
- People who make up the community
- Safe community
- Sense of family
- Friendly

2. Environment/nature

- Beautiful rivers
- Beautiful parks
- Peace and tranquillity

- Pristine nature that surrounds the town
- 3. Sports and recreation
 - Facilities (walks/parks/pool/fields)
 - Walking tracks
- 4. Location
 - Peaceful
 - Beautiful
 - Main Street is the 'heart' of the town
- 5. Heritage
 - Historical significance
- 6. Education
 - Schools

What would you like to see improved?

The participants were broken into small groups working with butcher's paper to workshop what they would like to see improved in Gloucester.

Gloucester participants would like to see improved some of the following:

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Tourism promotion • Dog friendly areas • Welcome to Gloucester – better integration for newcomers to the town • Explore the cultural diversity • Expand the medical facilities • Another toilet in the park • Better lighting the park • Diversity in activities available • Connecting cycle paths • Dam with solar/hydro electricity • Pathway around stock route • Access to services • Reliability of trains and coaches • Youth space • More events and activities • Better tourist facilities • Beautification of CBD • Social housing • Attraction of new light industry • Mental health services • Celebration of history • Employment opportunities and business expansion • Better roads into Gloucester 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Protecting water security • Growing support for small local business • Reduce phone black spots • Amphitheatre on the grass hill in the park • Safety for tourists and residents • Support the cycleway to Barrington Bridge • More trees in Gloucester Park • Bring more people to Gloucester • Signage – Barrington Coast entry points • Taxi service • Protect our environment • Protect the waterway and the quality • Recognition of Aboriginal heritage and history • Value all residents and the diverse community • Young people and activities • Place to welcome refugees • Car parks need trees planted • Provide water filling stations in the main street
--	---



How would you like to see your community in 10 years' time?

This was an activity for participants to write on a postcard how they would like to see their community in 10-20 years' time.

Environment

- Leader in innovation and environment sustainability
- Focus on climate change
- More trees
- Plastic free community
- Focus on renewable energy
- Sustainable
- Protect the environment and the pristine beauty of the region
- Known as the leader in sustainability for innovation in social economic and environment spheres; the most liveable town in NSW

Community

- More inclusive for mothers and families with facilities
- Inclusion and opportunities for youth
- Acceptance of diversity and inclusion

History

- Acknowledge our Aboriginal heritage and pay respect to that history
- Work with the Indigenous community on projects to bring the history into the community

Facilities

- Connectivity of pathways and cycleways for the town
- Mental Health services
- Midwifery services
- Disability access improvements in the town

- Public transport options
- Road improvements

Youth

- Central youth space
- Education opportunities
- Entertainment and activities for all youth ages
- Local youth events
- Sporting facilities for youth

Economic

- Increase business incentives
- Grow the economic community
- Vibrant main street

Tourism

- Improve the signage
- Improve the promotion of our beautiful area
- Promote the environmental activities to participate in
- Create Gloucester as a thriving hub of activity for tourists

Overall a revamp of the town collated with improvements to the sustainability and development/economic growth of the town whilst maintaining the rich historical significance and 'small town' culture is prominent across all comments.



Call for nominees for steering group

During the Think Tank sessions, we discussed the opportunity to nominate for the steering group and the exciting opportunity to take part in the creation of Gloucester's Local Community Plan with hardcopy nomination forms available at both sessions.

Call for nominations was advertised using the following methods;

- Direct email to participants
- Media Release calling for EOI to be part of a Community Plan Steering Group – 24 September 2019
- Gloucester Advocate on 2 October
- Facebook post – 25 September 2019
- Weekly News – 25 September (Manning River Times, Wingham Chronicle, Great Lakes Advocate), 2 October (Manning River Times, Wingham Chronicle, Great Lakes Advocate), 9 October (Great Lakes Advocate)

Determination of steering group representatives

Nominations closed on 2 October 2019 at 5pm.

12 applications were received with nominations to join the steering group.

A recommendation was prepared for the 13 November 2020 Ordinary Council meeting. Due to the emergency fire crisis in our region at the time this meeting was cancelled.

On 27 November 2019 at the Ordinary Council meeting the recommendation was carried for all who nominated to form the Local Community Planning steering committee.

On 10 December 2019 the group convened for their first training session.

Training session

The steering group met with Council's engagement staff and were provided with:

- Local Community Plan toolkit
- Reference material (collated on USB)
- Notepads, pen, post-it notes.

The training session was an informal conversation that was intended to bring the members together for a "get to know each other" discussion and for our engagement staff to deliver a powerpoint presentation focussing on the expectations of the steering group, overview of the toolkit, meaningful engagement and what happens next.

The meeting was well received by all members who showed enthusiasm and vision.

Following this the group made its own arrangements about meeting times and frequency.

Stage two – drafting the plan

Gathering information

The steering group was supported in gathering information to help background their plan. This support included the provision of a range of plans and documents that already existed for their area including:

- Gloucester Region Community Strategic Plan
- Gloucester Region Delivery Program 2013-2016
- GSC Community Plan
- Social and Economic Review GSC 2008
- MidCoast Council Community Engagement Strategy
- MidCoast Destination Management Plan
- MidCoast Council Local Community Planning Framework
- Example local community plans
- Think Tank session summaries
- Local Community Plan toolkit

Engagement staff also attended meetings during this stage and provided the following assistance

- Administration assistance
- Support for understanding the resources provide
- Support for the templates provide and understanding LCP toolkit

Drafting the plan

The steering committee met on several occasions during 2020 and 2021 to discuss the issues relevant to the Gloucester community and bring together thoughts for the local community plan.

In developing the plan the above documents were considered, along with the information provided by the community through the 'think tank' and 'postcard' exercise and feedback at Council's community conversations.

A draft plan was circulated and discussed with the committee over several meetings before it was put to the community for wider feedback.

It should be noted the committee's ability to meet was severely impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic and there were large periods of time no meetings were held.

Stage three – checking in with community

Reviewing the plan

On 5 August 2021 we started a community consultation to assist the Gloucester community to finalise their 10 year vision for their community, by reviewing the draft local community plan. Specifically, we asked them to confirm their identified four priority areas, prioritise the actions they had identified and identify any further actions where gaps may exist.

The following activities were undertaken until 14 September 2021, when the consultation closed.

Checking in with the community

In total, **81 participants** made 90 contributions to engagement activities online on Council's. There were a further **nine other submissions** received during the consultation. **One further submission** was received after the consultation close date, it has been included in the appendix but not in the results of this report. Most participants in the consultation gave Gloucester as their home postcode (89%). A total of 7% gave another postcode, and 4% did not provide an address.

Of the online submissions, the spread of age groups of the people contributing were:

Age group	Online	%
5-18	0	0%
19-24	1	1.3%
25-40	16	22%
41-55	14	19.2%
56-65	15	20.5%
65+	21	28.7%
Unknown	6	8.2%

How did we engage with people?

The announcement of public health orders due to the COVID-19 pandemic, especially stay at home orders, influenced the engagement activities that were able to be undertaken during this consultation. The achievement of 90 participants, including good representation of older Gloucester residents, is indicative that these results are valid.

The following activities were undertaken to seek input and build awareness of the community consultation on Gloucester's draft local community plan.

Engagement	Online electronic engagement and	Communications
2+ consultation kits delivered to Gloucester High School and Preschool and to steering committee members	81 people provided online feedback	700 flyers distributed (Council office, High School, Neighbourhood Centre, Preschool and Saleyards)
2 static displays with feedback post boxes at Gloucester Library and Bucketts Way Neighbourhood Centre.	745 visitors to Have your say page on Council's website	5 stories covered in print and radio 3 advertisements in local newspaper
	24,845 people reached on 4 Facebook posts	Submissions
	360 emails to key stakeholders and community members	9 submissions received on time
	90 clicks via News Wrap newsletter	1 late email submission received

Online activity

The *Have Your Say* page provided an online hub to both share information, encourage participation in engagement activities and direct linkage to the online survey. Information included background to the project, previous consultation, the draft local community plan document, timeline, key dates and a description of local community plans.

Activities included a feedback survey specifically designed to gather the information described in 'reviewing the plan' above. The page also included a discussion board asking participants 'have we missed anything?'. These comments are provided the appendix.

Over the period of the engagement, there were 745 visits to this page.

What the community said

The first consultation resulted in a long list of priorities identified by Gloucester's community as important for their area. While all priorities are worthwhile, a short list of the most important is needed, to provide a realistic focus for the community to begin to achieve outcomes for Gloucester.

Participants were asked to choose three community priorities, four priorities to improve Gloucester's economy, three priorities to protect Gloucester's environment and five priorities to improve local infrastructure. The full results of the priority ranking feedback are shown in the appendix. The highest-ranking priorities in each area are shown on the next page.

Community: priorities

Work with educational facilities to increase opportunities for young people to further their education within the Gloucester community	27 people	41.5%
Support existing not for profit community groups to deliver important community services and social connection	23 people	35.4%
Encourage and facilitate projects that acknowledge and celebrate Aboriginal history, culture and reconciliation	21 people	32.3%

Economy: priorities

Develop a beautification program for the Gloucester Main Street, including provision of more shade trees	29 people	44.6%
Actively promote Gloucester as an attractive business investment and relocation destination	26 people	40%
Actively promote Gloucester as an optimal location for light industry	19 people	29.2%
Develop strong relationships between businesses, education and government agencies through networking and participation in collaborative opportunities	19 people	29.2%

Environment: priorities

Maintain healthy waterways through implementation of initiatives from Council's Catchment Management Plan	26 people	40%
Support the investigation and planning for off-stream storage for the town water supply	25 people	38.5%
Encourage residents and local businesses to utilise renewable energy	23 people	35.4%

Infrastructure: priorities

Retain and attract medical professionals and specialists adequate to community need	34 people	52.3%
Maintain medical facilities and services adequate to community need	29 people	44.6%
Extend and connect cycleways and pathways within the CBD and to neighbouring villages, such as cycleway to Barrington	29 people	44.6%
Retain existing mental health services and lobby for additional services where gaps are identified	22 people	33.8%
Attract and maintain services to support those in the community impacted by alcohol and other drugs, domestic violence and homelessness	22 people	33.8%

Extended responses to draft local community plan by type / subject

The full responses to this online discussion board, along with other submissions received, are included in the appendix. A total of 27 responses were received, some very detailed. To provide an overview of the topics and flavour of the responses, a summary is provided below.

***Focus priorities identified by the community are highlighted**

Section A	42 total responses
Responses to the priorities in the draft plan	
Responses on water availability, management and utilisation, including support for off-stream water storage	4
Community renewable energy projects – including recommendation for edited text and EV charging for cars	6
Crisis housing for families and victims of domestic abuse	1
Medical facilities, physical and mental health initiatives	3
Transport – public provision	4
Infrastructure – waste and recycling	1
Footpaths and pedestrian and cycle routes	4
Tourism, including 2 comments for RV friendly facilities	6
Parks and sporting facilities	4
Economic / business initiatives	3
Community partnerships	2
Aboriginal and historical recognition initiatives	1
Aged care	1
Telecommunications	1
Library	1

Section B	4 total responses
Responses seeking clarification of local community planning process	
Commendation for Draft Report	1
How will community now be engaged to implement the plan	2
How will council ensure the priorities that are not its responsibility are implemented?	1
Section C	23 total responses
Suggestions for further inclusion / amends for the Draft Plan	
An extensive submission from an Aboriginal person providing permission to use information about the history of his family in Gloucester region in the report.	1
A proposal with several recommendations for wording changes in the draft was received to be considered.	1
Acquisition of Kinburra (sic) facility for community use run by local provider ie. BWNG	1
Suggestion for addition of priority for supported independent living housing for people in our community with disabilities	1
Comments that road improvements are needed to achieve other priorities	10
Preschool children can't access school buses so rural pre-schoolers are disadvantaged	1
With growing population, need to ensure adequate water pressure with our current system to maintain a reliable supply.	1
Comments that Health section of draft document needs to be amended as it omits information about health services that are available in Gloucester.	2
Draft LCP needs to more clearly define the area it covers – is it Gloucester and rural surrounds or just town area	1
Document ignores economic importance of rural industry	1
Local Land Services should manage trees	1
Volunteers should be supported	1
Community Halls are too expensive for small groups to hire; however they need to be maintained.	1

Revising the plan

From the feedback received during the community consultation period, a number of minor changes and additions to the plan were recommended to the steering committee. The changes to the text of the plan included grammatical corrections, rewording and the below:

- Pages 4 and 10 – addition of paragraph recognising the importance of Gloucester as a hub for outlying areas
- Page 8 – rewording of coal seam gas proposal outcome
- Page 13 – acknowledgement that access to affordable and diverse housing choices is an issue and rental availability is low
- Page 15 – inclusion of details regarding the services provided by Gloucester Hospital
- Page 16 – inclusion of information about the sporting opportunities for the community
- Page 19 – additional information about the role of a community plan

These additions to the priorities, outlined below, were discussed with steering group members and now form part of the plan put forward.

- Page 22 – inclusion of ‘retain existing hospital and community health services’
- Page 25 – support the establishment of transport services to link social housing with services and the central business district
- Page 28 – support community renewable energy programs to provide clean renewable energy for residents and businesses
- Page 28 – support opportunities for vehicle charging stations and solar shaded car parking
- Page 29 – lobby for upgrades to infrastructure in the Gloucester industrial area
- Page 30 – development of new attractions and opportunities for tourists
- Page 30 – increase opportunities for RV camping
- Page 32 – support opportunities for community strengthening activities
- Page 32 – support the continued operation of community halls as important spaces for the community to connect

The community priorities were also indicated through asterisk notations.

Appendix

Refer to Attachment C (separate document)