



**MIDCOAST**  
council



# **MIDCOAST 2030**

**Shared Vision,  
Shared Responsibility**

Community Strategic Plan 2018-2030



**MIDCOAST**  
council

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## ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF COUNTRY

*MidCoast Council acknowledges the Gathang speaking people, the custodians of the land to which this plan applies. We pay our respect to all Aboriginal people of the land and to Elders past, present and future.*

## Thank you to our community

MidCoast Council has prepared this plan on behalf of the MidCoast community and would like to thank:

- The residents, community groups, business and government representatives and other stakeholders who provided input into the plan and participated in community engagement processes associated with the development of the plan.
- Councillors for their ongoing commitment to supporting the preparation of the plan and for working towards achieving the long term objectives for our community.
- Staff for their contribution to the preparation of this plan and associated documents.

# MIDCOAST 2030:

## Shared Vision, Shared Responsibility

### Community Strategic Plan

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# INTRODUCTION

As a community it is important for us to have a document that expresses how we want to develop into the future. This document is called a Community Strategic Plan.

MidCoast Council has developed *MidCoast 2030: Shared Vision, Shared Responsibility* to be the guiding document for our community.

This has been based on the aspirations of our community, determined through a number of consultations conducted since the formation of MidCoast Council in May 2016, along with reviews of existing plans and strategies for our region.

As the first Community Strategic Plan for our region, *MidCoast 2030: Shared Vision, Shared Responsibility* plays a critical role in providing the framework under which we will set the direction of our activities, programs and projects over the coming years.



I am proud to present  
**MidCoast 2030:**  
*Shared Vision,  
Shared Responsibility*

## **MAYOR'S MESSAGE**

This is an important document, not only because of the role it plays in setting council's future direction – but also because it is the first Community Strategic Plan for the new MidCoast region.

It captures the ideas, priorities and values of our community and is a plan that will guide us with decisions and activities over the coming twelve years.

Our region is diverse, both in our geography and our people, and as we come together to move into the future we need to continue to value this diversity. As such, this plan has been developed in collaboration with our community and is an important first step in building connections across our new council area.

During the development of this plan it became clear that maintaining the local identities of our towns and villages is important. Councillors and staff recognise this and are committed to working with our unique and diverse communities.

Shared vision, shared responsibility emphasises the importance of fostering our economy, while protecting and enhancing our environment and connecting our communities with each other.

Leadership and a shared vision are important aspects of moving forward, and while we take great pride in presenting this plan to our community, delivering this vision is not something we can achieve in isolation.

Shared decision making and effective working partnerships with our community, government agencies, non-government organisations and businesses, will be critical to our success.

As this plan unfolds we look forward to continuing the conversations and working closely across our community to deliver on the projects and services outlined.

We live and work in the best, most beautiful part of the world. Let's work together, having a shared vision and shared responsibility, to make it even better.

**Cr David West**  
Mayor  
MidCoast Council





# OUR VISION

We strive to be recognised as 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 VALUES

## **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.





# A SNAPSHOT OF US

## OUR REGION



**196**  
towns  
villages  
& localities

**3229** km  
roads  
1439km sealed  
1790km unsealed

Our MidCoast population of 92,000 is a diverse community with an exciting future.

The geographical region of 10,052 square kilometres extends from the coastline, west to the escarpment of the Great Dividing Range, on the mid north coast of New South Wales.

The area spans from beaches on the coast to mountains in the hinterland and numerous 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 the rugged, forested ranges of the Barrington Tops, Woko and Tapin Tops National Parks.

We are a region rich in cultural pride and connection to the landscape and we embrace the spirit of reconciliation.

Being well known for our natural beauty, our region encompasses 58 National Parks and reserves, five coastal lagoons, one marine park, an internationally recognised wetland in the Myall Lakes, eight Aboriginal Places and the magnificent World Heritage listed area of the Barrington Tops.

Protecting and celebrating these features is a key focus and contributes to our lifestyle and wellbeing.



**196km**  
of coastline

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



We have a strong sense of community. We want our towns and villages to reflect the vibrancy and individuality of the people within them and provide opportunities for us to connect and socialise.

Much of the rural area is used for farming, primarily dairy and beef cattle with a growing poultry industry. Oyster farming and fishing are important industries on our coast.

Our region is also a key holiday destination.

During the summer months the population swells with tourists coming to enjoy the region's pristine coastline and beaches, coastal lakes, lagoons and other attractions.

With the Pacific Highway, a national route, running straight through the region, we are an important connection point for travellers and transit companies.

The North Coast Rail Line connects Gloucester, Wingham and Taree to both Sydney and Brisbane.

Taree Regional Airport provides quick connection to Sydney, and from here travellers can access a range of domestic and international routes.



## OUR COMMUNITY

The MidCoast region has a diverse community, with a number of strengths, but also opportunities for growth and development.

Our population is spread across a number of towns and villages, all of which have their own unique qualities.

The region is a popular location for retirees. Our ageing community enriches us with their diversity and experience and supports our very strong volunteer sector. They are also responsible for our large, and growing aged care sector, providing a specialised service industry in our region.

This is 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 6.9 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. Our tourism sector has recognised this important role and has significant scope to expand Indigenous cultural experiences for visitor economy, in conjunction with our Indigenous communities.

By 2036



**112,962**  
people





With 8.2 per cent of our population reporting they need assistance with their day-to-day lives, we have higher than the NSW average of people living with a disability. The implementation of the National Disability Insurance Scheme has created potential opportunities for innovation in the way services and support is provided to people with a disability in our region.

Through our Disability Inclusion Action Plan, we are also committed to continually seeking ways to improve the accessibility and inclusiveness of our community through advocacy, collaboration and partnerships; raising community awareness of the needs and rights of people with disability; and ongoing and genuine dialogue with people with disability.

As a community we are conscious of our environmental footprint and we manage the resources we have available to us wisely as we transition from an economy based on traditional agriculture and industrial practices to one which is more diversified.

The largest employment industry in our community is now healthcare and social assistance, followed by retail, accommodation and construction\*.



### Top three industries



**HEALTHCARE  
AND SOCIAL  
ASSISTANCE**



**RETAIL  
TRADE**



**CONSTRUCTION**

\*2016 ABS data



**20.7%**  
**OF OUR  
COMMUNITY  
VOLUNTEER**

# WHO WE ARE

Our population



Median age is  
**52 years**  
(Regional NSW is 43)

Average household size of  
**2.24**  
PEOPLE



Median household income



**\$890**  
PER WEEK

**+2184**



increase in dwellings since 2011  
**TOTAL NUMBER 47,401**

**38.4%**  
ARE AGED 60+

[ Regional NSW is 27.1% ]



**20.7%**  
AGED UNDER 20

[ Regional NSW is 24.3% ]



**6.9%**  
IDENTIFIES AS  
INDIGENOUS

[ Regional NSW is 5.5% ]





## ABOUT OUR PLAN

MidCoast 2030: *Shared Vision, Shared Responsibility* is a plan for the future of the MidCoast community.

It expresses our community's vision and values and outlines how we can work together to make these become a reality.

The plan is aspirational, yet acknowledges that it needs to be flexible enough to adapt to our changing and growing community.

The MidCoast vision and values were developed from an extensive consultation process that spanned 18 months, from the formation of MidCoast Council. They are based on the aspirations, knowledge and feedback our community expressed through a range of forums.

The vision and values have been developed to set the tone and direction for council's planning for the future.

This plan has been developed with the community, for the community, and the responsibility of making the plan a reality rests with everyone. While the plan sets the direction for our activities as a council, partnerships with other government departments, businesses and community organisations are also crucial in delivering our community's aspirations.

In the development of this plan, other key government plans and legislative frameworks have been considered, in particular the NSW State Plan, the Hunter Regional Plan, the *Local Government Act 1993* and the *Integrated Planning and Reporting Guidelines*. This plan will be reviewed every four years in the year following a local government election, and a report on the progress of implementation of the plan will be presented to the outgoing councillors at the end of their term.





# WHY THIS PLAN IS IMPORTANT

Under NSW legislation councils are required to develop a Community Strategic Plan to create a whole of community vision so that council and the community are all working in the same direction. The plan also provides a way for council to be accountable to the community and the NSW Government.

From this plan, council develops a four year Delivery Program that sets out the key strategies that council will use to deliver the Community Strategic Plan over the following years.

An annual Operational Plan provides much more detail on how council will deliver the elements of the plan that are under our control and influence. The relationship of this plan to other key council documents is demonstrated below.



# HOW TO READ THIS PLAN

The following information helps to explain the headings used in this document.

**Value area**

The value areas are used to structure the plan. There are five key values in MidCoast 2030.

**Objective: where do we want to be?**

These are the community's long-term priorities and aspirations. They contribute to achieving our vision. Council has a custodial role in working towards realising these outcomes; however it is not wholly responsible for achieving them. Other partners such as state agencies and community groups also have an important role to play.

**Strategies: how will we get there?**

These are the activities and plans that will contribute to achieving the long-term objectives, and ultimately, the MidCoast vision.

**Performance measures:**

These are the indicators that will let us know if we are on track with delivering on the community's objectives.

**Partners: who can help?**

These are the local and state government agencies, other organisations and community groups that have an important role in delivering the long-term objectives. It will be important for strong partnerships to exist between these groups, if we are to achieve the objectives.

## WE VALUE... our unique, diverse and culturally rich communities

Where do we want to be?	How will we get there?	Who can help?
We are a diverse community that works together to care for all our members	<p>Provide equitable access to services, programs, spaces and facilities.</p> <p>Acknowledge, celebrate and empower our local Aboriginal communities.</p> <p>Strengthen the capacity of our young people to participate and thrive in community life.</p> <p>Support a diverse housing mix that provides choice and meets the needs of our community.</p> <p>Support the strengthening of social connectedness through programs and partnerships.</p> <p>Empower our towns and villages to retain and celebrate their unique identity, while working towards a shared</p>	<p>MidCoast Council</p> <p>NSW and Federal Government</p> <p>Community groups</p> <p>Volunteers</p> <p>Not for profit organisations</p> <p>Service clubs</p> <p>State and volunteer emergency and rescue service</p> <p>Local Aboriginal groups and organisations</p> <p>Social housing services</p> <p>Disability support services and advocacy groups</p> <p>Child, youth and family services</p>
We will embrace the uniqueness and creativity of our communities	<p>Support communities to identify priorities for ensuring they are sustainable into the future.</p> <p>Support the preservation and uniqueness of our history and cultural heritage in our towns, villages and significant places.</p> <p>Support and encourage our vibrant and creative arts sector.</p>	<p>Creative arts sector and representative groups</p> <p>Tourism providers and Destination NSW</p> <p>Chambers of Commerce and business community</p> <p>Aged care services</p> <p>Health providers and advocacy groups</p> <p>Education and training providers</p>
How will we know we are on track?	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1 The community is satisfied with council's recreational facilities</li> <li>2 The community is satisfied with the overall services council provides</li> <li>3 The community is satisfied with land use planning decisions</li> </ol>	





# OUR VALUES



# WE VALUE...

## our unique, diverse and culturally rich communities

Where do we want to be?	How will we get there?	Who can help?
<p>We are a diverse community that works together to care for all our members</p>	<p>Provide equitable access to services, programs, spaces and facilities.</p> <p>Acknowledge, celebrate and empower our local Aboriginal communities.</p> <p>Strengthen the capacity of our young people to participate and thrive in community life.</p> <p>Support a diverse housing mix that provides choice and meets the needs of our community.</p> <p>Support the strengthening of social connectedness through programs and partnerships.</p> <p>Empower our towns and villages to retain and celebrate their unique identity, while working towards a shared community vision.</p> <p>Welcome people of all abilities and backgrounds.</p>	<p>MidCoast Council</p> <p>NSW and Federal Government</p> <p>Community groups</p> <p>Volunteers</p> <p>Not for profit organisations</p> <p>Service clubs</p> <p>State and volunteer emergency and rescue service</p> <p>Local Aboriginal groups and organisations</p> <p>Social housing services</p> <p>Disability support services and advocacy groups</p> <p>Child, youth and family services</p> <p>Creative arts sector and representative groups</p>
<p>We will embrace the uniqueness and creativity of our communities</p>	<p>Support communities to identify priorities for ensuring they are sustainable into the future.</p> <p>Support the preservation and uniqueness of our history and cultural heritage in our towns, villages and significant places.</p> <p>Support and encourage our vibrant and creative arts sector.</p>	<p>Tourism providers and Destination NSW</p> <p>Chambers of Commerce and business community</p> <p>Aged care services</p> <p>Health providers and advocacy groups</p> <p>Education and training providers</p>
<p>How will we know we are on track?</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1 The community is satisfied with council's recreational facilities</li> <li>2 The community is satisfied with the overall services council provides</li> <li>3 The community is satisfied with land use planning decisions</li> </ol>	



# WE VALUE...

## a connected community

Where do we want to be?	How will we get there?	Who can help?
We feel connected to each other	Encourage and expand volunteering opportunities. Encourage public spaces, facilities and events that strengthen social connections.	MidCoast Council NSW and Federal Government Community groups
It is safe and easy to get around our region	Plan for, provide and maintain a safe road network that meets current and future needs. Encourage the use of alternative transport options through the provision of a safe, accessible and connected walking and cycling network. Advocate for the provision of community and public transport to meet the needs of our growing and ageing communities.	Volunteers Not for profit organisations Regional Development Australia Service clubs State and volunteer emergency and rescue services
We utilise technologies to connect us locally and beyond	Use technology and innovation to improve the way we live, work, learn and connect. Advocate for improved telecommunications and utilities to provide consistency across the region.	Local Aboriginal groups and organisations Disability support services and advocacy groups Creative arts sector and representative groups
We protect the health and safety of our communities	Work together to promote and enhance community safety. Continue to develop a sustainable network of water, sewer and storm water systems to meet community needs and health and safety standards. Increase the capacity of community, businesses and organisations to understand and meet public health standards. Encourage physical health and fitness through provision of appropriate recreational facilities.	Chambers of Commerce and business community Health providers and advocacy groups Utility providers Sporting associations Transport providers
How will we know we are on track?	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1 The number of people at council-run and council-sponsored events has increased</li> <li>2 The number of council volunteers has increased</li> <li>3 The condition of our sealed roads has improved</li> <li>4 There is an increase in the number of new developments connected by footpaths and cycleways</li> </ol>	



# WE VALUE...

## our environment

Where do we want to be?	How will we get there?	Who can help?
We protect maintain and restore our natural environment	<p>Value, protect, monitor, and manage the health and diversity of our natural assets, wildlife and ecosystems.</p> <p>Ensure climate change risks and impacts are understood and managed.</p> <p>Protect, maintain and restore water quality within our estuaries, wetlands and waterways.</p> <p>Improve the capacity of industry and the community to achieve the best possible outcomes for the natural environment.</p> <p>Ensure our natural assets are maintained to a standard appropriate to their use.</p>	<p>MidCoast Council</p> <p>NSW and Federal Government</p> <p>Environmental groups</p> <p>Volunteers</p> <p>Not for profit organisations</p> <p>Service clubs</p>
We manage resources wisely	<p>Sustainably manage our waste through reduction, reuse, recycling and repurposing.</p> <p>Proactively manage our resource consumption.</p>	<p>Local Aboriginal groups and organisations</p> <p>Education and training providers</p>
We balance the needs of our natural and built environments	<p>Ensure growth and new development complements our existing natural assets, cultural assets and heritage sites.</p> <p>Optimise land use to meet our environmental, social, economic and development needs.</p> <p>Promote greater utilisation of sustainable design in new developments.</p> <p>Encourage well designed streetscapes in urban centres.</p>	<p>Chambers of Commerce and business community</p> <p>Sporting associations</p>
How will we know we are on track?	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1 There are improved or maintained scores in the annual waterways report card</li> <li>2 There is a reduction in council's annual carbon emissions</li> <li>3 There is an increase in the % of household waste diverted from landfill</li> <li>4 The community is satisfied with land use planning decisions</li> </ol>	





# WE VALUE...

## our thriving and growing economy

Where do we want to be?	How will we get there?	Who can help?
Our region is a popular place to visit, live, work and invest	<p>Develop and promote our region as an attractive visitor destination offering products and experiences that meet the needs of our visitors and residents.</p> <p>Provide an environment to grow and strengthen local businesses, and attract new business.</p> <p>Increase opportunities for quality education and training.</p> <p>Advocate and identify opportunities for increased workforce participation.</p>	<p>MidCoast Council</p> <p>NSW and Federal Government</p> <p>Community groups</p> <p>Volunteers</p> <p>Not for profit organisations</p> <p>Regional Development Australia</p>
Our villages and business precincts are vibrant commercial, cultural and social hubs	<p>Implement innovative programs and projects to support business precincts in creating and maintaining vibrant spaces.</p> <p>Support and encourage the development and attraction of strategic events.</p> <p>Ensure strategies and processes recognise, maintain and support sustainable economic growth.</p> <p>Use existing knowledge, expertise and technology to develop businesses based on new ways of thinking.</p>	<p>Service clubs</p> <p>Local Aboriginal groups and organisations</p> <p>Child, youth and family services</p> <p>Education and training providers</p> <p>Creative arts sector and representative groups</p>
We encourage greater rural and agricultural economic diversity	<p>Encourage the diversification and sustainability of agribusiness through the utilisation of sustainable farming practices, new technologies and innovation.</p>	<p>Tourism providers and Destination NSW</p> <p>Chambers of Commerce and business community</p>
How will we know we are on track?	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1 There is a reduction in the MidCoast unemployment rate</li> <li>2 The net number of new businesses has increased</li> <li>3 Annual visitor numbers have increased</li> </ol>	



# WE VALUE...

## strong leadership & shared vision

Where do we want to be?	How will we get there?	Who can help?
We work in partnership with our community and government to ensure council is a trusted and flexible organisation that delivers on their needs	<p>Partner with, and positively influence the State and Federal Governments in delivering local priorities and services.</p> <p>Provide the community with an efficient, convenient and professional experience when using council services.</p> <p>Provide strong corporate and financial management that is ethical, fair, transparent and accountable.</p> <p>Provide strong governance frameworks.</p> <p>Develop and deliver services and programs that provide value for money.</p> <p>Implement community focused systems to support simple and convenient ways to access and do business with our council, both online and in person.</p>	<p>MidCoast Council</p> <p>NSW and Federal Government</p> <p>Community groups</p> <p>Volunteers</p> <p>Not for profit organisations</p> <p>Regional Development Australia</p> <p>Service clubs</p>
We maintain strong organisational health that contributes to council's success and community-focused culture	<p>Develop and grow a skilled, motivated and accountable workforce.</p> <p>Support a culture that values achievement, adaptability and safety.</p>	<p>Local Aboriginal groups and organisations</p> <p>Child, youth and family services</p> <p>Other councils</p>
We make opportunities available for the community to inform decisions that shape our future	<p>Provide clear, accessible, timely and relevant information to support and inform the community.</p> <p>Improve community understanding of how decisions are made for the local area.</p> <p>Empower community members to participate in decision-making by providing a broad range of engagement opportunities.</p>	<p>Education and training providers</p> <p>Chambers of Commerce and business community</p>
We develop and encourage community and civic leadership	<p>Inform, educate and empower council, business and community leaders to respond and adapt to challenges and change.</p> <p>Identify and participate in initiatives for regional cooperation and collaboration.</p> <p>Provide opportunities for the development of our elected and community leaders.</p>	
How will we know we are on track?	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1 The community is satisfied that council is well run and managed</li> <li>2 The community is satisfied that decisions are made in their best interest</li> <li>3 The community is satisfied with the level of engagement by council</li> <li>4 The community is satisfied that council provides value for money for ratepayers</li> </ol>	





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council