SUMMARY OF REPORT

This report proposes to place the Draft MidCoast Destination Management Plan on public exhibition for a minimum period of 28 days.

SUMMARY OF RECOMMENDATION

That the Draft MidCoast Destination Management Plan be placed on public exhibition for a minimum period of 28 days.

FINANCIAL/RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS

The Destination Management Plan (DMP) has been funded by the former Great Lakes Council and (following the merger) merger funding was utilised to extend the brief for the project across the newly formed MidCoast Council.

Funding required to implement the actions contained in the draft Plan will be made available through Council's adopted budget or through other sources of funding to be identified by Council.

LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

Nil.

BACKGROUND

The former Great Lakes Council commenced development of a Destination Management Plan (DMP) in May 2016. This project was put on hold in July 2016 following the council amalgamation. A decision was made at this stage to leverage work done to date on the Great Lakes DMP together with reference to the regional priorities contained in the existing Plans for Greater Taree and Gloucester Shire Councils, to broaden the project remit to encompass the wider Mid-Coast Council (MCC) region.

PURPOSE

The destination management process is recognised as imperative to building a strong, resilient tourism industry. The DMP will further enable the MCC region as a destination to respond to the market, whilst growing the value and importance of tourism to our industry and local community.

The MidCoast Destination Management Plan provides both a long term vision (2030) and a short term (1-3yrs) action plan outlining the infrastructure, experiences and products required to meet the anticipated potential visitor needs for the region. The Plan also provides analysis of the net economic benefits arising from the development of these products and experiences.

PROCESS OF DEVELOPMENT

Stage 1 - Research

The first task for the consultants working on this project was to conduct a comprehensive Baseline Analysis for the region which provides a clear understanding of the current visitation landscape,
together with financial modelling to forecast the potential growth of the MCC Visitor Economy to 2030.

A Product, Services and Experience Audit (including a gap analysis) was also completed.

**Stage 2 - Stakeholder Consultation**
Consultation has been undertaken across the MidCoast region with the tourism industry, business groups, event organisers, Local Aboriginal Land Councils and indigenous leaders, local producers, private landowners, other interest and community groups (eg. mountain biking, arts), National Parks, State Forests and other identified key stakeholders.

A Strategic Working Group with industry representation from all three former LGA's has provided ongoing input and feedback throughout this entire process.

**Stage 3 - Draft DMP Framework**
A draft framework document was developed outlining the major findings and recommendations. Feedback was provided by Council staff and the Strategic Working Group.

**Stage 4 - Draft DMP**
The draft plan is now presented to Council. During the exhibition period it is proposed to make the plan widely available to the public for comment. Following this period, comments will be considered and a further report and recommendation will be presented to Council for consideration.

**COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT**
The planned consultation process to be undertaken during the exhibition period will build on the consultation undertaken to date in the development of the draft (see above). The planned public exhibition period will ensure broad community awareness of the document and opportunities for comment prior to finalisation. The following provides a summary of the specific activities:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Activity</th>
<th>Detail</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Document availability</td>
<td>Hard copy draft documents to be available at all Council and Tourism Offices. Digital copies available via Council website.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Presentation of draft DMP by consultants at key locations</td>
<td>Local tourism industry, key stakeholders will be invited to attend presentation of draft by consultants at public sessions to be held at key locations across the MCC.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Briefing to be arranged with key stakeholders</td>
<td>One-on-one and small groups meetings to be arranged.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Close the feedback loop</td>
<td>A further report will be presented to Council following the exhibition period including a summary of feedback received and how these have been responded to.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Various communication channel will be utilised throughout the process to ensure awareness of the draft documents, how to obtain further information and how to have input. These will including:

- Council and Tourism website;
- Council and Tourism Facebook;
- Media releases to newspaper, radio and television;
- Radio posts;
- Local email networks including tourism networks.
COMMUNITY IMPACTS

The MidCoast already has a well-developed and significant tourism industry delivering social, economic and environmental value to the region. It is heavily reliant on domestic mainstream family tourism which is the main cause of the "hype-seasonality" experienced each year.

The Plan identifies a number of significant opportunities for the region that have the potential to grow the MidCoast Tourism Industry.

In exploring these various opportunities, a potential future for the MidCoast’s Tourism Industry has emerged where tourism makes full use of the region’s exceptional natural tourism assets much more effectively, the overall tourism mix is a much more balanced and sustainable one; and MidCoast is renowned both domestically and internationally as one of Australia’s leading nature and adventure-based tourism regions.

ALIGNMENT WITH COMMUNITY PLAN/OPERATIONAL PLAN

The development of a Great Lakes Destination Management Plan (DMP) to provide strategic direction for Great Lakes Tourism was an action contained in the Great Lakes 2016-17 Operational Plan, under Key Direction 2 – ‘Stronger local economies’. Support for tourism programs to help create strong local economies has been identified in all of the community strategic plans for the former councils.

TIMEFRAME

It is recommended the Draft MidCoast Destination Management Plan be exhibited for a minimum period of 28 days.

BUDGET IMPLICATIONS

Funding required to implement the actions contained in the draft Plan will be made available through Council’s adopted budget or through other sources of funding to be identified by Council.

RECOMMENDATION

That the Draft MidCoast Destination Management Plan be placed on public exhibition for a minimum period of 28 days.

ATTACHMENTS

A: Draft MidCoast Destination Management Plan

Due to its large size, Attachment A has been circulated in hard copy to the Administrator only as a paper conservation measure. However, this Attachment will be publicly available on Council's Website, copies are available at Council offices and copies are available on request.
RESOLVED (Turner) (as per recommendation)
That the Draft MidCoast Destination Management Plan be placed on public exhibition for a minimum period of 28 days.