

## A WARM WELCOME

“Better together” has been said on many occasions to describe the merger of Councils that created MidCoast Council and I agree.

The increase in scale and capacity that has occurred as a result of the merger has seen benefits right across the new Council area with work being done in areas that might not have previously occurred.

The biggest single achievement since the merger is putting together a \$30 million roads and bridges package to be spent over four years in addition to existing funding.

With the dissolution of MidCoast Water and bringing water and sewerage services into MidCoast Council there will be additional significant savings which will flow back to the community through enhanced services.

Many groups within the MidCoast Council community have benefited from the merger. \$1 million was set aside from the State Government merger funds to support volunteer community group's activities through the Stronger Communities program.

Overall Council is in a very good financial position with sustainable reserves to meet its future obligations. This will allow the incoming Council to think strategically about how best to enhance and improve the area.

Read more about our achievements to date, and the role of our new Councillors within the following report.

**John Turner**  
Administrator, MidCoast Council



## About MidCoast Council

MidCoast Council was formed by NSW Government proclamation on 12 May 2016 by the merger of the former Gloucester Shire, Great Lakes, and Greater Taree City Councils.

MidCoast Water became part of MidCoast Council by proclamation on 1 July 2017.

Managing a budget of **\$320 million** per year (includes capital and operating expenditure) and a **\$4.2 billion** asset base, over **900 staff** provide a diverse range of services to the community that extends across our **10,000km<sup>2</sup>** geographic region.

## Our mission

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

## Our community

You have defined the essence of the MidCoast region by **our connection to nature** and **our connection to each other**.

From the strength of our people, our enviable lifestyle and our forward vision, **we have it all**.

[midcoast.nsw.gov.au](http://midcoast.nsw.gov.au)

 MidCoastCouncil



# OUR REGION & OUR SERVICES

  
**90,000**  
people

  
**regional economy**  
Over **10,000** businesses  
**\$3.27 billion**  
Gross Regional Product

**10,000km<sup>2</sup>**  
Total area of our region  
#19 in NSW

**196**   
towns & villages

**3,229km**  
roads  
1,439km sealed  
1,790km unsealed

  
**waste**  
All disposed of locally  
**42,780**  
general waste services\*  
**43,116**  
recycling services\*  
**36,060**  
greenwaste services\*   
**1,337**  
public litter bins  
\* Weekly kerb collections

  
**542**  
bridges  
347 concrete/steel  
195 timber

  
**water**  
8 billion litres per year  
supplying **23** water pump stations  
**40,000** homes & businesses  
**1,200km** water mains  
**1,123km** sewer mains



  
**customer contact**  
90,000 calls per year   
**1 million** web page views  
**4,033** Facebook followers 

[midcoast.nsw.gov.au](http://midcoast.nsw.gov.au)



# OUR PLACES & OUR SPACES



**3,000ha**  
parks and  
open spaces



**750ha**  
of mowing



**58**  
full size playing fields

**26**  
sporting complexes

**86**  
playgrounds 

**13**  
skateparks 



**87**  
bbq facilities



**75**  
public toilets



**30**  
cemeteries



**pools**

**2**  
ocean  
pools

**10**  
chlorinated  
public pools



**Regional  
Airport**

**24 flights**  
per week

**15,000**  
passengers  
per year

## OUR PLACES & OUR SPACES

**11**



**libraries**

**37,000**  
members

**720,000**  
loans annually

our events attract

**15,000**  
people annually

**100,000**  
wi-fi log-ins  
over

**150**  
volunteers



**Manning  
Entertainment  
Centre**

**43,221**  
users per year

**95**  
performances per year

**2,264**  
volunteer hours



**Manning  
Regional Art  
Gallery**

**18,000**  
visitors per year

**20**  
exhibitions per year

**90**  
local artists per year

**5,000**  
volunteer hours



**property  
& machinery**

**792**  
public buildings  
maintained  
valued at over \$349 million

**550**  
machines/vehicles  
valued at \$32 million

**1,375**  
DAs determined  
valued at over \$219 million



# OUR ENVIRONMENT & ATTRACTIONS

## our waters and wetlands



**261km**  
Manning River



**200m**  
Ellenborough Falls  
one of the longest single drop waterfalls in the southern hemisphere



**192km**  
coastline  
including pristine beaches, some with 4WD vehicle access

**The largest producer of crustaceans and largest producer of Sydney Rock Oysters in NSW**

**5**  
coastal lakes and lagoons  
with water quality improving or maintained

**1**  
Marine Park



**4**  
wetlands of national significance

**2**  
award-winning remediated wetlands

**1**  
internationally recognised wetland (Myall Lakes)



## tourism

**2,737**  
visitors per night  
(average)

**19%**  
of our Gross Regional Product



## well known for our natural beauty



**58**  
National Parks and Reserves

home to **100**   
threatened plants

and **151**   
threatened animals

**Home to Barrington Tops renowned World Heritage listed area**



# OUR OBJECTIVES & ACHIEVEMENTS

## WE FOCUSED ON

In our first 15 months we have focused on establishing a structure that best places us to lay a strong foundation for success. This has been guided by five enduring characteristics of a Stronger Council:

### Strategic capacity

Firmly partnering in the system of government, with a strategic outlook, and confidently representing and progressing matters of local and regional significance.

### Outstanding service provision

Delivering residents and businesses with an efficient, convenient and satisfying experience when using our services, information and infrastructure.

### Robust community relationships

Ensuring residents and businesses have a voice in the vision for our community, and engaging in meaningful, open dialogue with the community in solving local issues.

### Strong performance

Adopting a robust and flexible approach and capably delivering on the needs of the community.

### Sound organisational health

Ensuring our staff, leadership and culture directly contribute to our success, and to positive, customer-focused delivery.

## We achieved:

- Business as usual. This was vital to ensure a smooth transition to the new Council and as we integrate services, improvements will continue to flow on to the community.
- Confidence within our communities that Council is functioning well with good governance and is leveraging its increased scale to partner with and positively influence the State Government in delivering local priorities.
- An engaged workforce of 900 people, actively involved in making the merger and transition to an elected Council a success. This includes a staff-led process to determine organisational values of wellbeing, integrity, sustainability and respect.
- Enhanced community engagement opportunities across the region that inform the strategic direction of Council.

## \$30 million roadcare program

We listened to the community and this program is our biggest achievement since we merged.



The money for this 4-year package has come from the \$4 million per year identified savings from the merger, together with \$14 million from the State Government merger funding. This windfall will go a long way in improving our roads and bridges and is in addition to Council's normal funding for roads and bridges.

(Refer to the Appendix for a list of roads already improved)

**\$12.3 million** grant funding attracted since the merger

### MidCoast One

Moving towards digital transformation and integration to deliver:

- improved responsiveness and timeliness of service
- efficiency and automation of processes
- convenience and ease of access through online services
- transparency and evidence-based decisions
- business process improvement

### Our identity

Community-driven brand development and input into the community strategic plan

**132** community consultations across **26** different projects with **30** community meetings in 10 different locations across the region

**\$4.8 million** savings realised and being re-invested in projects to benefit the community (primarily roads and bridges)

### developing future leaders

We understand that innovative, effective businesses develop their people. As part of our commitment to developing our staff, in 2017 we launched the inaugural Developing Future Leaders program with 16 participants from across the organisation.

**3 year freeze** on waste charges from rationalisation of waste facilities

[midcoast.nsw.gov.au](http://midcoast.nsw.gov.au)



## GRANT FUNDING SECURED

Council has secured the following State or Federal Government grants since the merger to support specific projects in the MidCoast area.

Name	Amount
Airport fire fighting water tank - Taree	\$40,000
Backyard Bushcare - Pacific Palms	\$100,000
Beach Scraping - Old Bar Beach	\$45,000
Better Waste Recycling Fund	\$115,311
Black Spot road safety project - Commerce St/Wingham Rd intersection, Taree	\$71,000
Black Spot road safety project - Coomba Park	\$350,000
Black Spot road safety project - Kent St/Peel St roundabout, Tuncurry	\$180,000
Black Spot road safety project - Lake St/Cross St roundabout, Forster	\$135,000
Cedar Party Creek Bridge Replacement - Stage 1	\$350,000
CTGIS bus stop shelters and improvements	\$85,000
Cycleway - Old Bar	\$500,000
Cycleway - Lake St, Forster - Stage 1 2016/17	\$130,000
Cycleway - Lake St, Forster - Stage 2	\$32,560
Digital Readiness Project - Gloucester	\$50,000
Eradicating African Olive towards regional state containment lines	\$92,425
Flood Risk Management Study & Plan - Gloucester	\$30,000
Flood Risk Management Study & Plan - Karuah	\$100,000
Flood Risk Management Study & Plan - Manning River	\$134,000
Gereeba Island bank - Wallamba River, Tuncurry	\$29,990
Great Lakes 'Great Walks' and 'Aquatic Trails' feasibility and master plan	\$100,000
Koala brochure - Dog attacks in rural residential areas	\$5,000
Koala hub identification and threat analysis	\$33,000
Library refurbishment - Gloucester	\$172,658
Littoral Rainforest Restoration Project - Hallidays Pt	\$69,212
Lowland Rainforest Restoration Project	\$77,770
Manning Great Lakes NRM Partnership - Stage 2	\$125,000
Manning Great Lakes NRM Partnership (Removal marine debris) - Forster	\$20,000
Manning Regional Art Gallery annual program funding	\$20,000
Manning Regional Art Gallery building improvements	\$15,000
Manning Youth Action Team	\$5,500
MidCoast Council & Shuetrim Project	\$35,000
National Youth Week	\$4,000
Old Bar/Manning Point Coastal Management Program (Development)	\$160,000
Pedestrian refuge - Lake St, Forster	\$18,000
Place Activation Project - Wingham	\$50,000
Remote Area Flood Study - Great Lakes	\$50,000
Renourishment Project - Jimmys Beach, Hawks Nest	\$35,500
Roadkill mitigation - Kingfisher Dr, Hawks Nest	\$5,000
Squirrel Glider Project - South Forster	\$92,800
The Bucketts Way - Road reconstruction	\$8,300,000
Transition Assistance Program	\$35,000
Wetland Acquisition - Minimbah Creek, Minimbah	\$225,000
Wetland and foreshore restoration - Lower Wallamba River, Tuncurry	\$91,349
<b>total</b>	<b>\$12,315,075</b>

## Stronger Communities

**The Stronger Communities Fund was established by the NSW Government to assist newly merged councils in the delivery of projects that improve community infrastructure and services.**

A total of \$15 million was made available to MidCoast Council through this fund. The 'Major Projects Fund' set aside \$14 million to be allocated to larger scale priority infrastructure and services projects that deliver long-term economic and social benefits to the community.

With roads being highlighted as the MidCoast community's highest priority, a four-year \$30 million Roadcare Program has been developed, using these funds and \$4 million per year in identified merger savings and efficiencies. We have already completed an extensive \$1 million resealing program, and invested \$860,000 in urgent bridge repairs.

**"Many community groups across the MidCoast area have benefited from the merger".**

John Turner, Administrator,  
MidCoast Council

\$1 million was set aside from the Stronger Communities Fund to help kickstart projects proposed by not-for-profit community groups that provide a benefit and meet an identified need within the community.

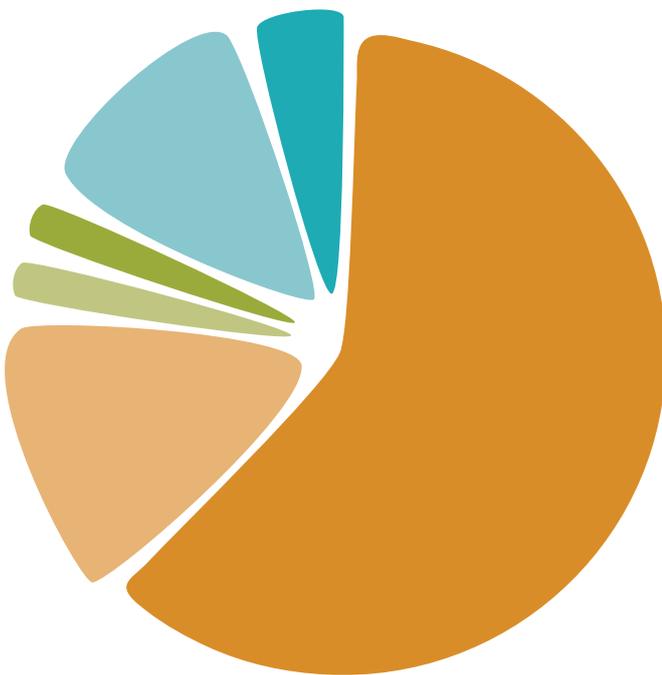
Over 150 applications across two rounds of funding were received, with \$1.07 million allocated to assist 36 groups. The total value of projects, due for completion at the end of 2018, will total \$2.49 million across the Council area.

# OUR FINANCIAL POSITION

## CURRENT POSITION

Overall Council is in a good financial position and its long term financial plan indicates its ability to meet future obligations.

This will allow the incoming Council to think strategically about how best to enhance and improve the region.



Revenue	%
Rates and annual charges	61.2
User charges and fees	18.0
Interest and investment revenue	1.7
Other revenue	1.7
Grants and contributions (operating purposes)	12.7
Grants and contributions (capital purposes)	4.7
<b>Total</b>	<b>100.0</b>

## Addressing the issues

**Our \$230 million per year budget<sup>^</sup> allows us to deliver a diverse range of quality services across our community.**

While savings and efficiencies are being reinvested to address the condition of our roads and bridges, a pre-existing significant infrastructure backlog valued at \$180 million and an annual shortfall of \$5 million per year for renewals, prove to be an ongoing challenge. Merger savings and efficiencies alone are not enough.

With roads representing our community's number one priority, we knew we had to take a proactive approach to address this issue. The recent special rate variation (SRV) approval will allow us to address the annual \$5 million shortfall and begin to fund the backlog of works.

Equating to a cumulative increase of 27.3% over four years, including the annual rate peg, the SRV will enable us to:

- take action immediately rather than allowing our roads and bridges to continue to deteriorate
- fund the renewal gap, and help in starting to reduce our backlog
- improve community satisfaction with our road network
- provide funding of a harmonised environmental program across the MidCoast area

We are also working in close partnership with the State Government on how to best address our significant infrastructure issues that simply cannot be addressed in a reasonable timeframe on our own.

The SRV allows us to leverage up to \$50 million towards an additional roads package which forms the basis of a proposal being discussed with the State Government. If successful, this would see a matching contribution from Government enabling a total package of \$100 million for the region's roads and bridges. Being a merged Council with increased scale and capacity enables this close collaboration with the State Government, which in turn benefits the MidCoast community.

<sup>^</sup> \$320million including capital and operating expenditure



# MAINTAINING MOMENTUM

## INTEGRATED APPROACH

To date our focus has been on building a strong foundation and the integration of strategic and operational activities and plans. This will enable the new Council to focus on their 3-year priorities for our community.

We recognise that sustainable long term results rely on an integrated approach, with attention to building trust and positive relationships, operational stability, constructive mindsets and long-term asset and financial planning.

### community

#### We exist for our community

- Community Strategic Plan, outlining community's long-term aspirations and priorities
- Customer Satisfaction Survey

### council

#### New Council focus areas

These may include:

- 3-year delivery program
- Policy integration
- Service review
- Loan and funding programs
- Building partnerships and relationships

### integration

#### Continued integration activities

These include:

- Asset management strategy
- Long term financial plan
- Operational processes
- Strategies – housing, biodiversity, rural economic diversity, regional economic development, and employment

### stability

#### Sound organisational health and strong performance

Supported through:

- Savings and efficiencies
- Organisational structure
- Community engagement
- Developing our people
- Partnerships and relationships (staff, community, State Government, Councillors)

## Moving forward

**New Councillors will have a big job to continue the seamless transition from merger to elected Council.**

It is vital they work together, no matter where they are from, to ensure the whole of MidCoast Council is considered in their deliberations. It is vitally important that the new Councillors do not think parochially. Parochialism is the destroyer of good governance.

A new era starts with the election of Councillors on 9 September 2017. It will be a challenging time but I believe with the good will of those elected working with staff and the community it will present an opportunity for great things to happen in the MidCoast Council area.

I would like to thank staff, our community and the LRC for working together in setting MidCoast Council up for success.

I'm proud of the positive reputation that MidCoast Council has established with the State Government over a relatively short period of time. And I respectfully hand over this organisation and all it has come to represent to the Council to be elected on 9 September. I look forward to watching on as MidCoast Council continues to grow, develop and provide for its communities.

**John Turner**  
**Administrator, MidCoast Council**  
May 2016-September 2017



# ROADCARE PROGRAM

as at  
August  
2017

## MAKING IMPROVEMENTS

With our community highlighting roads as their number one priority, we established a \$30 million Roadcare Program using a combination of merger funding and savings identified through efficiencies delivered through the merger. The Roadcare Program has already started making visible improvements across the MidCoast region.



**\$30 million**  
roadcare program

we listened to our community and it is our biggest achievement since we merged

**\$4 million** per year  
identified savings  
over a 4-year period  
(total \$16m)

**+**  
**\$14 million**  
State Government  
merger allocation

  
**timber  
bridges**

**\$700k**  
Manning Region

**\$160k**  
Great Lakes Region



funding to supplement  
Council-funded  
**reconstruction  
projects**

total: \$2.2m



**our roads**



**\$308k**

**Gloucester**

Additional road resurfacing:

Carter Cres, Cemetery Rd,  
Clement St, Hawdon St,  
Hume St, Tyrell St,  
Ravenshaw St, Reichert St



**\$692k**

Additional road resurfacing:  
**Taree**

Henry Flett St, Wingham Rd,  
Flett St, River St, Kanangra Drv,  
William Wynter Drv

**Tinonee**

Manchester St, Cotton St

**Wingham**

Richardson St, Wyoming St,  
Flett St

**\$500k**

**Diamond Beach**  
Diamond Beach Rd

**\$400k**

**Harrington**  
Harrington Rd

**\$800k**

**Wingham**  
Combined / Dennes Sts

**\$200k**

**Tinonee**  
The Bucketts Way Stage 5

**\$300k**

**Taree** asphalt overlay  
Commerce St

**"we have never seen  
so much roadwork  
in our area"**

MidCoast community  
feedback



**MIDCOAST**  
council

**STAY UPDATED**



**Our website is updated with our latest news, projects and works updates.**

**or follow us on Facebook**

[midcoast.nsw.gov.au](http://midcoast.nsw.gov.au)

 MidCoastCouncil