

What is
MidCoast?

New Year, new look!

Our new MidCoast identity is almost here!

Thanks to everyone who took the time during October and November to tell us what you value most about our sensational region, and the things that make our home unique.

Your valuable input has helped shape two creative directions which will be unveiled at the end of this month. Both options will be on display from 30 January for two weeks, when you'll be asked to vote on the one you think best represents our region.

Visit the website from 30 January to review the options and cast your vote.



When family and friends come to visit

About 50% of Aussie holiday-makers choose a destination based on the opportunity to visit friends and family. Many of our MidCoast residents will play host over the summer and with so much to see and do in our stunning natural playground, here's a few ideas:



NEW PLATFORM!

Black Head's Whale-Watching Platform
Bring your binoculars for spectacular panoramic views. Access is via the street behind the surf club (off Main Street), with a short scenic walk through to the lookout. *Note: Whale-watching season doesn't start until late-April.*



Woko National Park, Barrington Tops

Enjoy the wilderness of Woko. Off Thunderbolts Way (via Curricabark Road), is a stunning family friendly campground on the banks of the Manning River. Ideal for birdwatching, bushwalking, or drifting down the river on an air-mattress, Woko has something for everyone.



Submarine Beach Walking Track, Yagon

The track begins at Yagon campground in the northern reaches of the Myall Lakes National Park. Stroll through forests of blackbutt and banksia before discovering the golden sands and crystal clear waters of Submarine Beach. Via Seal Rocks Road and turn right onto Yagon Road. *NSW National Parks Permits available from Forster Visitor Information Centre or National Parks Office Booti Booti.*



greatlakes.org.au
visitgloucester.com.au
visitmanningvalley.com.au

Be involved... Community update meetings

As part of our commitment to keeping you updated and involved, the next round of Community Update Meetings will take place across the region in March and April.

Meet with interim General Manager, Glenn Handford and key MidCoast Council staff to hear about the progress we're making in streamlining our services to the community, efficiencies achieved to date, and our plans for the upcoming year. You'll have the opportunity to ask questions and discuss specific projects or concerns in your area.



Meetings take place regularly (around once every six months) and are a great way to get to know us and stay informed about what's happening across the region.

Arrangements for the March-April meetings are still being confirmed so check our website and local media in February for specific details of dates and venues.

COME ALONG AND LET'S TALK!

Integration proposal: MidCoast Council and MidCoast Water

In a Council meeting held on 21 December 2016, the proposal to dissolve MidCoast County Council (MidCoast Water) and merge its functions with MidCoast Council was endorsed. The State Government will now commence a formal process, which includes placing the proposal on public exhibition for community feedback. Our website will be used to provide up-to-date information as the process moves forward.

The recommendation to merge the functions of the two organisations has been informed by projected cost savings achieved through a single management structure, with consolidated back-office and corporate functions. As always, we remain committed to ensuring value to our customers through delivering efficiencies in services.

Visit the website to stay updated

Note: Information correct as at 21 December 2016



Emergency Services Property Levy

From 1 July, you'll see a new line item on your Annual Rates & Charges notice, the NSW Government's Emergency Services Property Levy. NSW Councils will be required to levy, collect and transfer the funds to the State Government. This is not a new levy; it replaces the State Government's existing Emergency Services Levy, which funds our fire and emergency services. This is a new way for the Government to ensure all property owners, not just those who have insurance, are contributing to the important work of SES, RFS and Fire & Rescue NSW.

Visit www.emergencyservicespropertylevy.nsw.gov.au to find out more

Delivering better roads for our community

Towards the end of last year we consulted with our community about a proposed special rate variation (SRV), primarily focused on renewing roads and bridges, and to help us start reducing our significant backlog of roadworks.



Thanks to all who took part in the SRV survey where you were quite clear in acknowledging that something needs to be done.

In early December we notified IPART of our intention to apply for a SRV. At that time the NSW State Government had not clarified whether we would be eligible to apply as a newly merged Council.

In mid December the Office of Local Government announced that new councils created in 2016 would not be eligible for a SRV for the 2017/18 rating year. Although we are not able to introduce a SRV, we have identified other opportunities for increasing funding for our roads:

- Efficiencies and savings that we expect to realise over the next 4 years are estimated at around \$18million and will be exclusively dedicated to improving our transport network
- We're applying to the State Government to allocate \$14million of the Stronger Communities funding towards providing better roads for our community.

While this expenditure will go some way in addressing our roads and bridges, there remains a shortfall in funding for our road renewal program and the backlog of works on our roads. We'll continue to work with the Government and our community on the best way forward.

To find out more visit midcoast.nsw.gov.au/SRV

Note: Information current as at 23 December 2016

STRONGER COMMUNITIES

Strengthening Stronger Communities Grants applications



Late in November, over \$500,000 in Stronger Communities grants was allocated to 17 very worthy community projects that ranged from boatsheds and community gardens, to hall refurbishments and exercise trails.

With the second round of funding due to be announced in April, Paul De Szell, MidCoast Council's Director of Community Spaces and Services provides some tips for making a successful application and some of the pitfalls to look out for.

Ensure your project is eligible

First and foremost, our assessment panel will check your application to make sure it meets strict eligibility criteria. This includes offering a benefit to the community, addressing an identified community priority, being well defined with a clear budget, being financially viable once set-up, and having a well-managed project team and processes to deliver the project.

Do your homework

Make sure your project will deliver on the needs and wants of the community and provide supporting evidence, such as survey results or statistics. Allocate time in the preparation of your application to speak with community members about your project, and collect data in a meaningful format. A simple poll or survey can make a big difference in showing support for your project idea. It's also a great way to road-test your concept and gather feedback that could make the end result even better.

Dollars and sense

Providing a clear and detailed budget outline is crucial in the application process. Think about every step required to deliver your project and then itemise the costs involved, including hard costs such as purchase of materials or hiring equipment, as well as labour costs even if these hours are provided by your community group at no charge. Where external costs will be incurred, attach quotes from potential suppliers. It's also wise to include a contingency allowance for incidentals like printing and postage, or unforeseen costs. The Assessment Panel will be looking for assurance that your project can be delivered within the budget allocated.

Another \$500,000 will be available to community groups in round two of the Stronger Communities fund, established by the NSW Government to support the delivery of projects that improve community infrastructure and services across our region.

Applications will be open from 1 May, so keep an eye out on our website and in local media where we'll announce details of information sessions we'll be holding to assist you with preparing your application.

Visit midcoast.nsw.gov.au/Community/Grants-and-Funding



CONTACT US

No matter what's on your mind, we're all ears.

Get in touch by phoning our friendly customer service team on 6591 7222 or emailing council@midcoast.nsw.gov.au