

Hallidays Point – 19 November 2019

Discussion summary

Part 1 – bushfire discussions

For anyone needing support and assistance during the recovery from the recent bushfires, visit the Disaster Welfare Assistance Point, established at 68 Wynter Street, Taree by the NSW Government’s Office of Emergency Management or call 1800 018 444. This service provides advice and support for those who have been impacted by the fires.

The first section of the Community Conversations session at Hallidays Point provided the community with an opportunity to discuss the recent bushfires and concerns that may have arisen as a result.

At the meeting were representatives from the Office of Emergency Management, Insurance Council of Australia, Welfare Services and MidCoast Council.

A number of questions were asked, and a summary of the main topics discussed is provided:

Cleaning up of land

Council does not have the power to order landowners to clean up their land due to a fire threat. The NSW Rural Fire Service does have this power and if you are concerned about bushfire hazards near you, this can be reported via their website at www.rfs.nsw.gov.au/plan-and-prepare/know-your-risk/Bush-fire-hazards-and-your-property/reporting-a-bush-fire-hazard

Council does have a responsibility to look after its own land and that it manages on behalf of the Crown. Council works with the RFS to undertake control burns when practical.

Can Council conduct or authorise backburning

No Council cannot authorise a backburn. The NSW Rural Fire Service is the only authority that can do this.

How do evacuation centres work?

Evacuation centres are identified in the local emergency management plan. There are two evacuation centres identified in Hallidays Point – the Black Head SLSC and the Black Head Bowling Club. While these locations are authorised evacuation centres, they do not become an evacuation centre until they are established by the NSW Police during an emergency situation. It is up to the person leading the emergency response to determine when evacuation centres are put into operation. This is based on the current situation and the need.

There are also a range of neighbourhood safer places listed on the Rural Fire Service website.

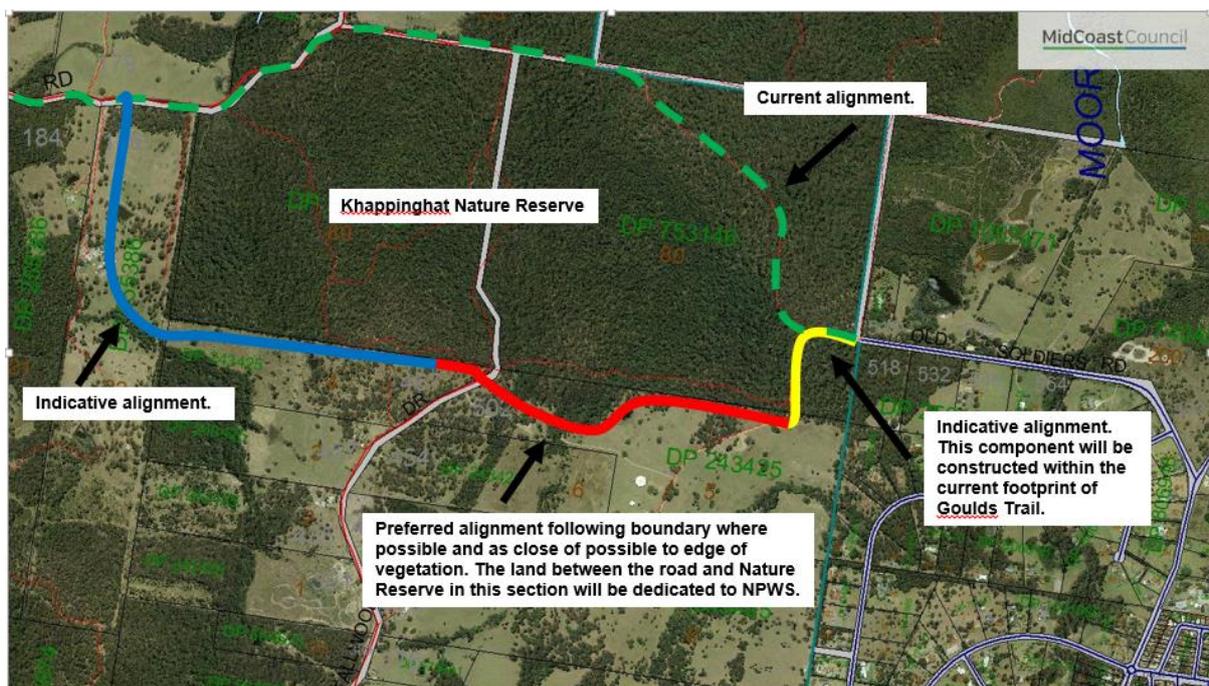
What has occurred with the cleared areas surrounding the Bowling Club?

The vegetation around the Black Head Bowling Club is classified as littoral rainforest and is protected under State Environmental Planning Policy (Coastal Management) 2018. We are currently investigating the clearing of the protected vegetation.

What is the situation with the Old Soldiers Road second access option

Council consulted in the late 1990s with the community about the desire to realign Old Soldiers Road to enable it to be upgraded as an alternate access to Hallidays Point from The Lakes Way. The landowners who adjoined the southern and western boundaries of Khappinghat Nature Reserve offered to construct the road through their properties in exchange for their land being rezoned for rural residential development. Council accepted this offer and chose a route for the realigned road to go through these properties. To enable this to occur, Council needed to have this concept accepted by the State Government. Council has been working with a number of State agencies to progress this matter. The current status of this work is:

- The State have agreed to let a rezoning of the abovementioned land to proceed in exchange for that part of the realigned road to be constructed by the landowners. The landowners are currently prepared studies to support the rezoning;
- The State have agreed to undertake an Act of Parliament to enable the section of the road that will remain within the Nature Reserve to be realigned, widened and dedicated to Council, though no timeframe has been provided for this to occur;
- In 2016 Council included the cost of upgrading the existing alignment west of the Nature Reserve, the part of the road that will remain within the Nature Reserve and the unsealed portion of the road east of the Nature Reserve within the Greater Taree Section 94 Contributions Plan. This plan will collect \$4.6M from development within Hallidays Point over time to upgrade and realign these sections of Old Soldiers Road.
- The below map shows Council's adopted realignment route. The map shows approximately where the road would go (in blue, red and yellow) – the actual location will be subject to further surveying and design work.



What is the situation with our water supplies

A large amount of water was used in fighting fires, during a time in which we are already in drought and water restrictions. Level four water restrictions have now been introduced to reduce water use to preserve our supplies. www.midcoast.nsw.gov.au/News-Media/Severe-water-restrictions-for-most-MidCoast-areas

Items noted during discussions on butchers paper

<p>Hydrants</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Readiness <p>Clearing blocks</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Regulations • Privately owned • Crown land • Council owned <p>Hazard reduction</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Regulations • Back burning regulations <p>Council climate change planning</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Policy adopted, action plan being developed <p>Access</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Revisit Old Soldiers Road taskforce • Impact development on traffic 	<p>What are the options?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Can't be widened • Can't be straightened • Other road options <p>Water security</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Status of aquifers • Status of town – how much water is left <p>Evacuation</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • RFS – centres – school • Planning and preparedness • Facebook valuable <p>RFS</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Why weren't evacuation centres stood up? • fires near me APP not up to date <p>Water Issues</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • OEM • Contaminants, retardant
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Part 2 – community conversation

Council staff reported on how we plan to deliver the top five priorities from the Community Conversation held in Hallidays Point earlier in the year. Those present were invited to contribute suggestions on the detail of these projects to assist in our delivery.

Below are the top five priorities that were raised from the first round of community conversations and the commitment from council.

Top five priorities identified in round one

1. Improve local roads and footpath connectivity

Many communities have asked for improvements to the footpath network in their area, including cycle ways. A Pedestrian Access and Mobility Plan (PAMP) is the first step in addressing this. The PAMP will provide a framework for developing pedestrian routes and infrastructure to cater for the needs of all pedestrians; including older persons, people with mobility or visual impairments, young children, tourists, cyclists and recreational pedestrians. There is an emphasis on the development of commuter pathways as well as acknowledging the importance of recreational cycling for a healthy community.

The PAMP is being developed in conjunction with a Bike Plan which will identify opportunities for developing and enhancing pedestrian and cycle related activities and attractions for community members and visitors.

We currently have a significant program of works on our roads. This level of investment will continue for at least the next four years before reducing to a lower level.

Our main priority is to manage the greatest risks on the network. This will mean that funding for the next few years will tend to be concentrated on our regional roads. These are the roads that connect our communities.

They tend to have high traffic loads, higher speed limits and therefore are greater risk.

As we fix the worst areas on these high risk roads, we will be able to spread our maintenance resources further into the local road network and fix more of the things that are wrong. Over time our roads program will include more and more of the local roads that affect access to residences.

We are working on updating the forward roads program based on the funding levels that we are now projecting as being available into the future. Once this is complete, it will be presented to the community so that everyone can see what section of road is programmed to be done and when. We are also working on better reporting for our minor road maintenance activities so that the community can see what we have been doing in regards to roads maintenance and where.

2. Street lighting

We have undertaken an inspection and confirmed that a lack of street lighting exists in the older developed areas. This makes it harder for motorists to recognise intersections and other significant road features at night. We will be working with our street lighting provider to plan for and deliver cost effective improvements as part of our future works. This will improve road safety.

3. Manufactured home estates

Council is working with the Department of Planning, Industry and Environment to progress the issues around Manufactured Home Estates. A planning proposal that recommends including a Manufactured Home Estate local provision in all three LEPs has been issued a 'gateway determination' from the Department. This determination requires additional research to be undertaken before it can proceed to consultation with the community. New Development Control Plan provisions for Manufactured Home Estates were exhibited and are being reviewed based on feedback received during community consultation. The draft Housing Strategy has been developed and community feedback will be sought early next year. The Manufactured Home Estate issues faced across the MidCoast were considered in the development of this strategy.

The Tallwoods Manufactured Home Estate appeal underwent a conciliation conference in August 2019 where members of the community addressed the Commissioner. Ultimately, all of the parties could not come to an agreement on the matter and as a result it has been adjourned for a hearing in the Land and Environment Court in early 2020.

4. Park facilities

Many communities have asked for improvement to community spaces and recreation areas. MidCoast Council recognises the social, environmental and economic importance of recreation to the community. In recognition of this importance the Community Spaces, Recreation and Trades department is committed to commissioning a Recreation Strategy for the MidCoast Local Government Area.

The Recreation Strategy will provide the overarching framework and strategic direction for the planning and improvement for recreation facilities and services.

The purpose of the strategy will be to identify opportunities to improve the provision and quality of recreation facilities by developing a clear understanding of the current supply and demand of recreation facilities in conjunction with the needs of the current and future population.

5. Beautification

Many communities have asked for CBD beautification and /or locality based beautification strategies. The importance of these strategies to the vibrancy and quality of our urban and commercial areas is recognised. We will now look to developing specific localised beautification plans to increase the aesthetic quality of the natural and built landscapes in our central business districts while welcoming visitors and enhancing quality of life for residents. Staff have been working with CBD businesses to participate in the Vibrant Spaces initiative to create more engaging and activated public spaces. A program has started to gather base information such as traffic levels, parking availability and pedestrian activity. This information will help to inform the concept planning and options assessment in future stages.

6. Drainage

Council has a program of investigating and analysing urban drainage catchments. This program is the source of projects for consideration in future funding. The Hallidays Point area is on the list for investigation. Other priority areas are in the process of being investigated at the moment.

Q & A session

Below is not an exhaustive list of all questions asked either online or at the meeting, but rather a representation of the main issues discussed.

Q: Where is the draft housing strategy up to?

A: The draft housing strategy is currently available online www.midcoast.nsw.gov.au/Council-Meetings/25-September-2019-Ordinary-Meeting – however we will be undertaking a broad consultation with the community between February – April next year to allow the community to understand the draft strategy, along with a range of other draft planning strategies and reviews, and provide feedback.

Q: Can we have an update on the proposal to have a footpath between Diamond Beach and Black Head via Red Head?

A: The current option for a pathway is along the road reserve of Diamond Beach Road. This is a project that could be considered as part of the upcoming Pedestrian Access & Mobility Plan (PAMP) and it would link the school with the adjoining areas. The PAMP will allow us to rank and prioritise funding to be allocated to works.

A pathway along the foreshore is dependent upon development proceeding to provide suitable public land. This will continue to be considered in the future as the opportunities arise in conjunction with development. This may also be a project listed in the PAMP, however delivery will be subject to development proceeding.

Q: What is the latest on the skate park for Hallidays Point?

A: A decision was recently made by Council resolution that Wylie Breckenridge Park is the preferred location for the establishment of a skatepark in the Hallidays Point area. More

information can be found at www.midcoast.nsw.gov.au/News-Media/A-step-closer-to-a-skatepark-at-Hallidays-Point

Q: When will work start on the Greening Strategy?

A: On 23 October 2019 Council recognised we are in a state of climate crisis and reported on the progress of the development of a Climate Change Policy and action plan.

www.midcoast.nsw.gov.au/Council-Meetings/23-October-2019-Ordinary-Meeting.

The Greening Strategy will be delivered as part of this action plan.

Q: Will there be a street tree planting program for essential shade and beautification?

A: This will be addressed as part of the Greening Strategy referenced above.

Q: Manufactured Homes Estates and residences in retirement villages do not pay commensurate rates. Why is Council powerless to get issue resolved at State Government?

A: This is a State Government issue, however MidCoast Council continues to strongly lobby the State Government on this matter.

Q: It appears the work on the Back Beach parking area and access to the beach has been completed however it appears not to improve the safety for pedestrians wishing to use the beach. What additional works are proposed?

A: This project is not yet complete. A pedestrian access ramp is still to be constructed to improve the safety of pedestrians wishing to use the beach.

Q: Does Diamond Beach Road have cyclist lane provisions?

A: Unfortunately, the topography of the area restricts the feasibility of safely introducing cyclist lanes. As we design new roads / upgrade roads there is an intention, where feasible, to include cyclist lane provisions.

Q: Will the PAMP sessions take into account beach access? We are waiting for the Diamond Beach access and facility to be available for public use safely.

A: We have increased the beach permit fees this year to begin to offset that extra revenue to a fund specifically for beach access users. We will look at using the road access currently there to become the disabled access.

Q: What happens if the fires flare again and we are on water restrictions?

A: We expect members of the community to use water as required to protect their property.

Q: Are there restrictions on bore water for domestic properties?

A: No. MidCoast Council doesn't regulate the use of bore water and it is not part of the water restrictions currently in place. Water restrictions only apply to the town water supply. If you live in a suburban area (such as Tuncurry or Tea Gardens / Hawks Nest) and you're using bore or spear water, it's a good idea to put up a sign in your garden, so others are aware you're not breaking water restrictions. It's also a good idea to make sure you conserve water, even rainwater and bore water, during drought. NSW Water has further information on bore water www.waternsw.com.au/customer-service/water-licensing/about-licences/constructing-a-bore.

Q: The tourism season is nearly upon us – how are we getting the message out to tourists for water restrictions?

A: We are working with accommodation and service providers to let bookings know early of the current situation and how their holiday experience could potentially be affected. We also have a range of other things in place to ensure tourists are aware the restrictions are in place while they are holidaying in our area.

Q: Can we restrict water pressure to help with the restrictions?

A: Pressure reduction is a possibility in some areas. The time taken to implement the reduction may not meet the time of restrictions. Care must be taken to maintain pressure for firefighting purposes at all times.

Q: What is the long term plan for water in the region?

A: MidCoast Council has a long term plan for water security – called Our Water Our Future - it can be found under the heading 'other strategic plans' on our website <http://www.midcoast.nsw.gov.au/Council/Plans-and-reports>

Q: Is the Nahiic Aquifer rain dependent?

A: Yes, the Aquifer is rain charged and in times of drought, the Aquifer's water level also drops. The Nahiic Aquifer is only part of how we supply water to the Manning and Forster Tuncurry area and was developed to diversification of risk as a second independent source of water. More information on the Nahiic Aquifer system is available on our website www.midcoast.nsw.gov.au/Water-Services/Water-Supplies

Q: Five years ago the 400 metre stretch of Black Head Road to the junction of Diamond Beach Road was rebuilt. The surface is now breaking-up – is it the workmanship or standard that is deficient?

A: This will need to be investigated. When dealing with road construction there are a lot of variables from the ground conditions, variability in materials and construction. While we can minimise this as much as possible through testing, verification and quality assurance it is difficult to guarantee the entire length of the road will perform the way it was intended. To alleviate the risk of this we could over engineer the road design, however this will come at an additional cost.

Q: When will Red Head Road be rebuilt?

A: The road and intersection with Diamond Beach Road will be constructed as part of the conditions of consent for the Seascape development. The development level is close to triggering this work to occur. Council will make enquiries with the developer to identify if there is a timeframe for this to occur.

Q: What roads in the Hallidays Point area are on the works program?

A: This year's program includes work on Blackhead Road from the intersection of Diamond Beach Road eastwards to the start of the kerb and guttering.

Q: When is Council going to restore Eastern Valley Way between Diamond Beach Road and Tallwoods as a general purpose road as it appeared in the Parish Maps? Why wasn't our local brigade and the community consulted prior to closure? Why was the old road described as a two-wheel track when it was constructed to the then same standard as Tallwoods Drive and Blackhead Road?

A: This road was temporarily blocked some time ago. We will review the reasons for this and consider removal of the traffic controls currently preventing access.

Q: When will council be addressing the access to Hallidays Height from the southern side entrance of Black Head Road to Glen Court? It was and is only meant to be temporary until the developer exceeded the agreed amount of lots, which I believe they will do should council approve two more lots on 8 Greenview Drive. It is both dangerous and congestive especially with the bus stop opposite.

A: This is a temporary road intended to permit initial development of the subdivision. The long term access is to come from new roads that extend through another development from the intersection of Diamond Beach Road and Blackhead Road. Once the limit is reached no further development can occur in this subdivision without the long term road access being provided. There is no timeframe for this to occur. It is solely reliant on development proceeding on the relevant land.

Q: What is the latest cost to relocate to the Masters site in Taree?

A: All the information about this project can be found on our website at www.midcoast.nsw.gov.au/headoffice. This includes all the details on how the project will be funded.