

Stroud – 10 December 2019

Discussion summary

Council staff reported on how we plan to deliver the top five priorities from the Community Conversation held at Stroud 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 six priorities that were raised from the first round of community conversations and the commitment from Council.

Top six priorities identified in round one

1. Showground

We have recently completed works on the amenities and the tennis courts. Work is also underway on the new multi-purpose building at Stroud Showground. The multi-purpose building combines a number of facilities previously located throughout the showground and is part of the restoration of the showground following damage sustained by flood in 2015. A local contractor is completing the works and there are alternate amenities available to use, meaning there will be minimal impact on showground users. The public should be aware that the project site will remain closed until the completion of the multi-purpose building which is expected to be around April 2020.

2. Branch Lane / estuary health

Council undertook testing on the gravel material used on the Branch Lane from a local source. This testing looked at the tendency of the material to contribute towards erosion and sediment issues in the water body. Council has since conducted training for all road maintenance teams in sedimentation and erosion control, with some funding and priority being given to establishing controls as part of our routine maintenance works.

3. 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.

4. Parks / reserves / playgrounds / toilets

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 Council 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. Mill Creek

Mill Creek is almost entirely on private property. Significant weed problems occur along this creek line especially widespread weeds. Efforts to address widespread weeds are focused on limiting spread to new areas or where control can be achieved. Council’s current priority is targeted camphor laurel removal in the upper Gloucester River catchment and at Forster where distribution is limited. For Mill Creek to be considered as a site for works outside the current program substantial and ongoing commitment from all landholders along a significant portion of the catchment would be required.

6. Heritage

Stroud is recognised as one of the important heritage locations in the MidCoast. Stroud has a State listed heritage place (Quambi House and Anglican Church), 26 local heritage listed places and a Heritage Conservation Area over the main street. Through the development of the MidCoast Local Environmental Plan and Development Control Plan we will be undertaking a review of the planning controls that apply to heritage to ensure their robustness and practical application are maintained. The Stroud Historical Society are also represented on the Heritage Reference Group that discusses heritage issues across the MidCoast.

Further feedback on top six priorities

<p>Showground</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Well done! • Looks beautiful, most beautiful showground around, well done
<p>Branch Lane/ Estuary health</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Check Little Branch Bridge for movement • Branch Lane tree removal and four grades per year • Upgrade Branch Lane from highway More traffic on highway end • What can be done to improve visibility eg council slashing road verges etc near bends • Little Branch Creek is a part of the Port Stephens Marine Park. Water quality is being compromised • If only 1km sealed a year will take 12 or more years to seal. Council needs to look at alternative funding / grants / s94 / indigenous employment programs • Needs at least 2kms of sealing per year for next 6 years • Try to squeeze some Branch Lane funding out of NSW Fisheries to help arrest silt going into waterways – even if

	<p>only 200 metres each side of creeks done, it's a start</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Slash the vegetation beside the Branch Lane for better line of sight • Section 94 funds for Branch Lane includes Quarry property. Any funds to be spent on the lane • Include the local indigenous community in building the Lane • Most dangerous part of Branch Lane is first 2km from highway end • Removal of trees to widen parts of the Branch Lane. Narrow blind corners and dead trees • Branch River Bridge, Little Branch Bridge. Are gravel results from testing open for all to see and what are councils limits on testing (ppm) • Dust goes in our water tanks on our roof catchment. Can we have road sealed outside properties with houses • Why has regular grading program slowed (even before fires) – seems to be at least one time less a year than it used to be • What can be done to slow the silt run off from the Branch Lane when council grades eg hay bales / silt screens
<p>Improve local roads and footpath connectivity</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Bucketts Way – prioritise investigation, design and funding of Limeburners Creek Bridge near passing lane • Pathway program – join / connect both ends of Stroud Road East Public School. Was on a priority list some time ago • Limeburners Creek Bridge over Limeburners Creek when will it be widened? • Walking / run circuit, 5km park run circuit would be welcome for the community's well being
<p>Parks / reserves / playgrounds / toilets</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sign needed at Stroud Road scenic park to let visitors know there are toilets near hall. People are going to toilet out the front of peoples homes on the footpath • How about mow from footpath to tree line on line with and budget of footpath mowing. Slash back / middle as required
<p>Mill Creek</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Weeds need to be removed from Karuah River. Washpool was always a great swimming hole and picnic spot. Not now.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Proactively scope interest in adjoining parties, council lead initiative
Heritage	

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.

A lengthy discussion was had on the Branch Lane

The road: 998 metres of Branch Lane (south, from intersection with Warraba Road) is scheduled for sealing this financial year. Also scheduled in this financial year is the upgrading of three crossings of The Branch River and remediation of adjacent drainage (170m total seal). This is 50% funded by the NSW Government's Marine Estate Management Strategy (to reduce sediment from unsealed roads entering estuaries) and 50% funded by MidCoast Council. Works are scheduled for this financial year.

Estuary health: We are currently developing agreements between MidCoast Council, Hunter Local Land Services and Landcare Australia to deliver a grants program in the Karuah Catchment to improve catchment health over the next three years. The project will launch this financial year and complement the existing grants program currently being run by Hunter Local Land Services. \$500,000 will be spent on ground works in the Karuah Catchment through this project.

Council has also been successful in receiving a \$100,000 grant from the NSW Environment Trust to fund a three year project to support poultry farmers in the Karuah Catchment to reduce their impact on the Karuah River (currently awaiting receipt of funding agreement from the Environmental Trust). This \$250,000 project includes additional cash and in-kind contributions from MidCoast Council and Hunter Local Land Services to assist 17 poultry farms across the Karuah, Myall and Wallis Lake catchments.

It is acknowledged the road is a major source of sediment.

Speed zones: This is entirely a matter for the RMS. Council does not have a role in setting speed zones.

Bridge: The previous timber bridge was in poor condition and we had provided additional support mid span to allow the bridge to remain in service with a load limit. Following a severe storm event some time ago we took the opportunity to replace the timber bridge with a temporary steel structure. This bridge was compliant with current standards so the load limit was no longer required.

Section 94 funds: There are conditions that relate to the way in which this money is spent, and there is nowhere near the money in that fund to seal the Branch Lane.

Q: Can you provide an update on the roadworks at Limeburners Creek

A: This work was underway when the fires started. At that time a temporary seal was placed on the road to hold it and make it safe over the Christmas period. It is intended to finalise shortly. The speed zone will go back to 90 km when the final seal is complete.

Q: Can B doubles access the Bucketts Way to bring fodder into the area as part of the drought relief efforts?

A: The permits that have been issued do have a restriction on drivers to only operate on the route outside of school zone restrictions. This is to avoid B-Doubles using the road while school children are entering and leaving school. All current permit holders are satisfied with their conditions.

Q: How much money remains in the Duralie fund?

A: There is \$124,000 remaining and this will be divided up within the community.

Q: When will Limeburners Creek Bridge be upgraded?

A: Limeburners Creek Bridge is part of The Bucketts Way Corridor Strategy that will see 10 bridges on The Bucketts Way upgraded and is funded under the Roads of Strategic Importance program.

Q: How is Stroud's water supply going?

A: The Stroud water supply is faring reasonably well, with the community doing a good job on level four restriction targets. It is not as vulnerable as other systems we operate.