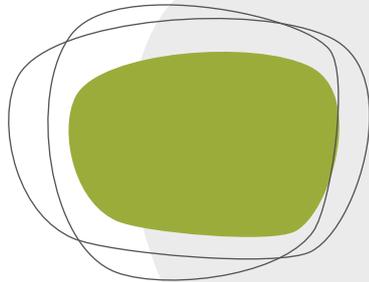


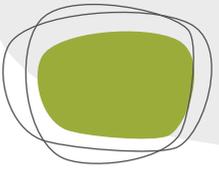


MIDCOAST
council



LOCAL COMMUNITY PLANNING FRAMEWORK

Building strong unique communities

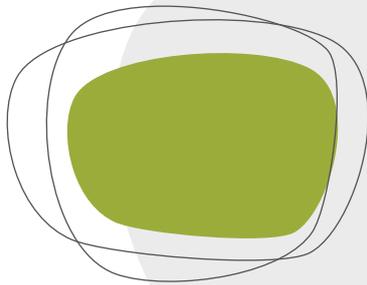


OUR VISION

We strive to be recognised as a place of unique environmental and cultural significance. Our strong community connection, coupled with our innovative development and growing economy, builds the quality of life we value.

OUR MISSION

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

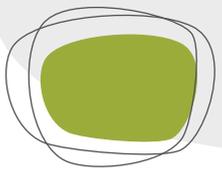


LOCAL COMMUNITY PLANNING FRAMEWORK

Building strong unique communities

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LOCAL COMMUNITY PLANNING

In developing our community strategic plan, **MidCoast 2030: Shared Vision, Shared Responsibility**, we had a number of conversations with community members about their hopes, dreams and desires for the future of MidCoast.

While the responses were as diverse as the communities that make us one, the common thread was the desire to retain the unique identities and qualities of our towns and villages and for communities to be active participants in making this happen.

Local Community Planning is an opportunity for people within a community to come together, have a conversation about what they want for the future and develop a plan for how they will get there.

Local Community Plans also help Council understanding and prioritise needs and desires of our communities, as well as setting in place the foundations for creating long lasting change in communities by mobilising community champions to lead community projects.

Local Community Plans are owned by the communities. Council's role is to provide advice and support to ensure they are as effective as possible.

The vision, focus areas and objectives outlined by communities in their community plans will provide important insight for Council to ensure what we deliver to our communities aligns with their identified needs and desires.

It is our responsibility to ensure we are delivering on our own strategic aim of valuing our unique, diverse and culturally rich communities, through empowering them to retain and celebrate their unique identity while working towards a shared common vision.

DELIVERING OUR VISION AND MISSION

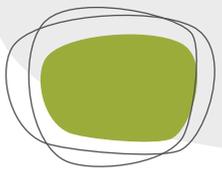
The delivery of local community planning for towns and vilages across the MidCoast is in line with the vision our community has set for itself, and the path to achieving that vision as set out in our community strategic plan **MidCoast 2030: Shared Vision, Shared Responsibility**.

Local community planning is intrinsically linked with **MidCoast 2030: Shared Vision, Shared Responsibility** - which outlines our values as:

- our unique, diverse and culturally rich communities
- a connected community
- our environment
- our thriving and growing economy
- leadership and shared vision

In particular, local community planning is linked to strategy 1.6 of the plan, 'empower our towns and villages to retain and celebrate their unique identity while working towards a shared community vision'.

In working with our communities to plan their futures, we are also delivering on our organisational mission to deliver benefits for our community in a way that adds value and builds trust.



OBJECTIVES

RELATIONSHIPS

Build relationships between Council and the community

BUILD TRUST

Provide an opportunity to build trust between Council and the community

COMMUNITY OWNERSHIP

Encourage greater community ownership over priorities and actions

SHARED RESPONSIBILITY

Encourage shared responsibility for community plan outcomes

UNIQUE VOICES

Maintain the unique voices of towns and villages in our operational planning

COMMUNITY PRIDE

Build a sense of ownership and community pride

WHAT IS COMMUNITY PLANNING?

Community planning is the process of a community working together to identify the long term vision and objectives to improve the social, economic and environmental wellbeing of their town or village.

High level strategies and actions can then be identified to meet these objectives. These can be community-led or joint initiatives with other stakeholders, for example Council, local not-for-profit organisations or businesses. These longer term strategic directions and action plans are then documented and reviewed periodically to ensure they are still relevant and reflective of the community's needs and desires.

Community planning is an ongoing process and to ensure the plan remains relevant and reflective of community needs and desires, the plan should be reviewed and updated periodically. Community planning is based on the principle that local people are the experts on their own community and acknowledging this leads to better decision making.

How can community planning help?

Community planning can help prioritise community projects in that locality and also support funding applications for community projects.

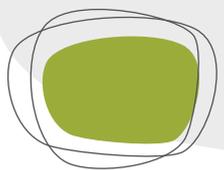
Community plans may be influential to Council and other agencies' planning and priorities, or as a tool to advocate to external agencies for recognition of community need and priorities.

Outcomes of good community planning

Good community planning allows communities to develop their own skills and resources to grow their community in a sustainable way. Some of the more specific benefits of good community planning include:

- The outcomes of actions implemented from the plan would be more meaningful, as they have been well thought out, planned in advance and make the most of strengths within that community.
- Community ownership and buy in - increasing the likelihood of long-lasting change.
- Actions are reflective of the whole community's needs and desires.
- Communities with plans are more organised to be able to take advantage of arising opportunities, such as grants.
- Enables communities to be more strategic and targeted in gaining resourcing and support for community projects.
- The process of developing a community plan can often help build enthusiasm, skills, confidence and motivation in community members and organisations. If people have been involved in the planning, they are also more likely to help in the implementation of the plan.
- Creating a plan is an opportunity to build relationships and connections between community members and groups that may not have otherwise developed.

Local community planning enables our small towns and villages to prioritise what is important to them, ensuring they can retain their own unique identities while remaining connected to the bigger picture.



OUR APPROACH TO COMMUNITY PLANNING

Some of the key elements and principles we will apply within the community planning program include:

Strategic planning

The intention of the program is to encourage communities to look at the big picture and the long term vision. In doing this the program will avoid the risk of creating wish lists and ensure there is linkage with Council's strategic direction.

Empowering communities – shared responsibility

The design of the program is intended to build the capacity and sense of shared responsibility in creating positive outcomes in local communities. This is achieved through both opportunities for up-skilling in training courses, as well as the collaborative approach of Council working with steering groups to complete their local community plans.

Strengths-based approach

The local community planning program is designed to encourage communities to develop their plans from a strengths-based perspective. This is a principle of focusing on the assets and resources that already exist within a community and designing strategies to build upon and strengthen these assets.

Assets could exist both in the physical elements of a community and the skills, knowledge and passions within the local residents themselves. Planning from a strengths-based approach will not only mean projects are more likely to be successful, they also require less resourcing and are more likely to be sustainable in the future.

Representative community engagement

Community engagement forms a significant part of the community planning process. Communities will be encouraged to engage with a broad demographic in their communities to ensure the plan is representative of the whole community. Demographic data will be collected at engagement activities to identify gaps in representation and additional engagement will be undertaken to address this where necessary.

Linkage to MidCoast 2030 and other planning documents

Local community plans will need to include a linkage to the strategic direction of Council via the MidCoast 2030 plan. Additionally, communities can link their plans to other strategic plans, such as regional plans, other Council strategic documents and the NSW State plan. This will not only strengthen the strategies included in the plans, but also support their integration with Council's Delivery Program and Operational Plan.

Built on existing networks

Local community plans will identify potential partners in the implementation of actions and work to identify these early on in the community planning process. This will ensure actions are much more likely to be effective and sustainable.

OUR LOCAL COMMUNITY PLANNING PROCESS

The process for supporting communities to develop and deliver a local community plan is a seven-stage process, which will be guided and supported by Council, but ultimately will need to be owned and supported by the community.

The community is guided through the development of the plan using a process that includes checking in with Council's engagement team at various steps along the way.

Work can't proceed to the next step until each stage is completed and assessed to ensure the development of the plan is on track, continues to be representative of the community it aims to serve and is on course to deliver a meaningful and achievable plan.

The development of the plan is supported by a range of templates, guides and face-to-face meetings at prescribed points in the process.

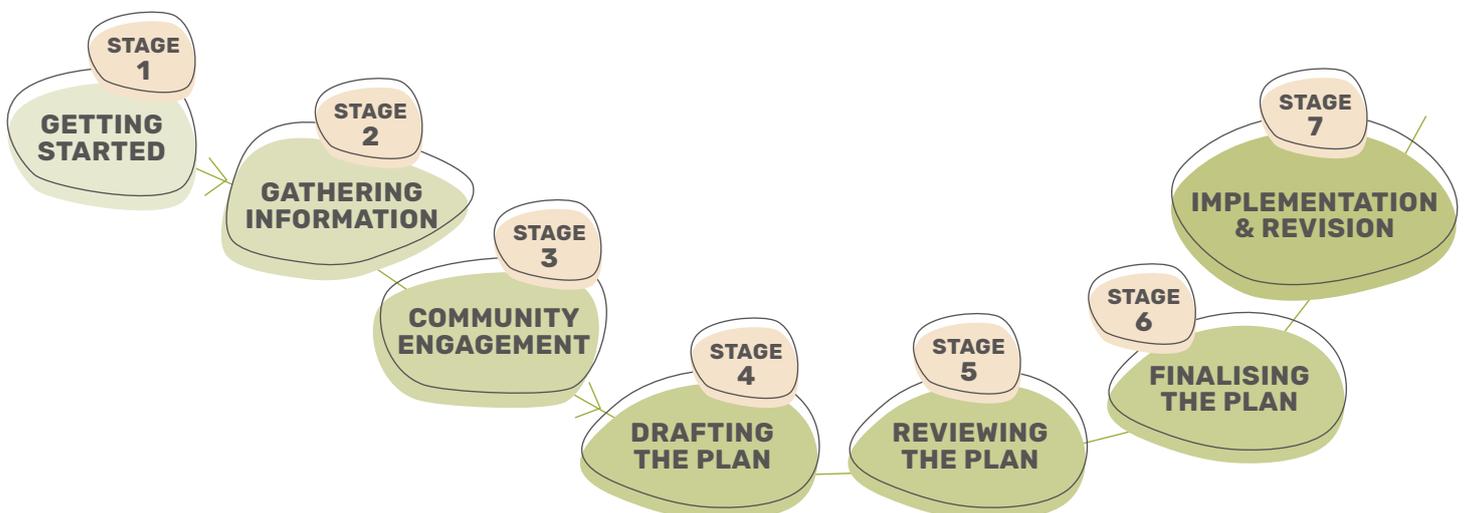
To successfully navigate the process, communities need to be able to show how they have engaged within their own community to ensure the plan is representative.

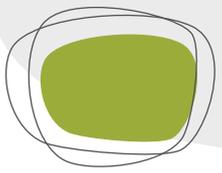
The process includes the engagement team undertaking consultation with key internal stakeholders to identify potential opportunities or barriers.

It is important that we undertake this process to ensure community plans don't live in isolation, but are regarded by staff as an important source of information on the needs of communities to inform operational and works plans.

The full process is provided at Appendix A, with a summary below:

Local community planning process





LOCAL COMMUNITY PLANNING FRAMEWORK

Local community planning process

GETTING STARTED

STAGE 1

The 'getting started' stage involves Council seeking interest from a community in developing a local community plan, the establishment of a steering group, and attendance at a local community planning training session. This training session is designed to ensure participants are aware of the commitment required to develop a plan and develop a timeline for their project.

GATHERING INFORMATION

STAGE 2

The community plan steering group is supported to create a profile for their community, and look at existing local infrastructure, facilities, skills and expertise. This is also a point at which existing plans and strategies for the area are reviewed.

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

STAGE 3

The steering group develops an engagement and communications plan to ensure they are talking widely with their community in the gathering of ideas and actions for inclusion in their plan. This stage is well supported by Council to ensure the plan, when developed, is as representative of the community as possible. There are several check-ins with Council during this stage.

DRAFTING THE PLAN

STAGE 4

A vision, key focus areas, objectives, strategies and actions are drafted as the plan starts to come together. These are provided to Council for review with internal stakeholders to ensure we are identifying the potential opportunities or barriers early and feeding this information back to ensure the plan is relevant, achievable and valuable for the community.

This stage also looks at identifying potential partners, measures to ensure the plan is making progress and preparing to take the draft plan back to the community.

REVIEWING THE PLAN

STAGE 5

The draft plan is taken back to the wider community for consultation. This will include gaining feedback on prioritisation of actions and potential projects. The feedback from this consultation will be taken into account in a review of the draft plan before finalisation. Once finalised the plan is submitted to Council for a review.

FINALISING THE PLAN

STAGE 6

The finalised plan is presented to an ordinary meeting of MidCoast Council for noting, and is uploaded onto the Council website. The plan is provided to internal stakeholders to support future planning for the delivery of services to our communities.

IMPLEMENTATION & REVISION

STAGE 7

Following the finalisation of the plan, the engagement team will review the process with the relevant community steering group and take on board any feedback requiring action to refine and develop the process. Action plans are implemented and updated annually, with the local plan ideally reviewed every four years.

ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

Delivery of our local community planning program will be undertaken by Council's engagement team, under the direction of the Communications and Engagement Coordinator. Delivering on the outcomes identified by local community plans is the responsibility of Council as a whole.

The vision, focus areas and objectives outlined by communities in their community plans should be taken into account by operational areas in the development of annual operational plan commitments to ensure what we as Council deliver to our community aligns with the needs and wishes of those communities.

Our responsibility is to ensure we are delivering on our own strategic aim of valuing our unique, diverse and culturally rich communities, through empowering them to retain and celebrate their unique identity while working towards a shared common vision.

Supporting activities

Our local community planning program will be supported by a range of other engagement activities to work with our various communities and ensure we are continually developing our understanding of their needs, wants and desires.

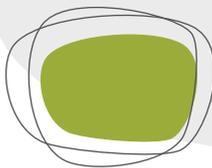
While resources will dictate the number of plans we can support for development each year, we will continue to deliver other activities to gain information from our communities, including:

- Community Conversations program
- Targeted engagement activities for specific projects in local communities
- Region-wide engagement programs
- Other programs as developed

EVALUATION, REVIEW AND MONITORING

The delivery of community plans for the MidCoast region is a delivery program and operational plan commitment. Progress on the delivery of the plans will be reported to both the community and the Council through the Integrated Planning and Reporting processes on a six monthly basis.

A review will be undertaken with each community steering group at the conclusion of the process to ensure we are continually improving on the delivery of this program. A formal review and revision of this document will take place every four years.

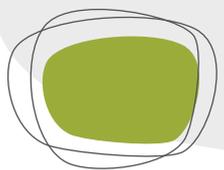


**LOCAL COMMUNITY
PLANNING
FRAMEWORK**



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LOCAL COMMUNITY PLANNING PROCESS

APPENDIX A

GETTING STARTED

STAGE 1

- 1.1 Prepare a list of local contacts
- 1.2 Seek interest from the local community
- 1.3 Establish a steering group
- 1.4 Define the geographical area the plan will cover
- 1.5 Complete an Expression of Interest form for MidCoast Council
- 1.6 Completion of local community planning prioritisation matrix with internal sign off
- 1.7 Attend a "Local Community Planning – Getting started" training session
- 1.8 Create a time plan for your process

indicates
community
check-in

GATHERING INFORMATION

STAGE 2

- 2.1 Create a profile of your community (training available from MidCoast Council)
- 2.2 Audit existing local infrastructure and facilities (template available)
- 2.3 Complete a people audit to identify local skills, expertise and passions
- 2.4 Review existing plans and strategies for both the local area and surrounding region

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

STAGE 3

- 3.1 Create engagement and communications plan (template available)
- 3.2 Create register for recording community involvement and consultation (template available)
- 3.3 Meet with MidCoast Council to discuss engagement approach and strategies (workshop facilitation assistance available where necessary)
- 3.4 Conduct community engagement activities
- 3.5 Review feedback summarise findings and develop actions
- 3.6 Meet with Council staff to discuss engagement outcomes
- 3.7 Conduct additional engagement with underrepresented groups (if necessary)
- 3.8 Meet with Council staff to review an additional engagement outcomes and determine next steps

DRAFTING THE PLAN

STAGE 4

- 4.1 Draft a vision and key focus areas/values for the area
- 4.2 Draft objectives for each key focus area
- 4.3 Identify linkages with local and regional plans
- 4.4 Draft strategies and actions for each objective
- 4.5 Provide copy of draft strategies and actions to MidCoast Council
- 4.6 Internal consultation with key stakeholders to identify potential opportunities or barriers
- 4.7 Meet Council staff to: Review draft based on internal Council feedback / Identify potential linkages and barriers with MidCoast 2030 / Assist in the identification of potential project partners
- 4.8 Allocate responsibilities against actions and identify potential partners
- 4.9 Identify measures to ensure the plan is making progress
- 4.10 Meet with Council staff to review draft Local Community Plan and confirm engagement approach for community check in, as outlined in 3.3

REVIEWING THE PLAN

STAGE 5

- 5.1 Consult with the community on Draft Local Community Plan, including prioritisation of actions/potential projects
- 5.2 Review feedback summarise findings and revise draft plan based on community feedback
- 5.3 Meet Council staff to review engagement outcomes and revised draft plan, and determine next steps
- 5.4 Finalise Draft Local Community Plan content
- 5.6 Submit final Local Community Plan to MidCoast Council for executive review

FINALISING THE PLAN

STAGE 6

- 6.1 Seek agreement on ownership of the plan, including monitoring and review (potential to seek community input/involvement in checking in process)
- 6.2 Prepare final Local Community Plan document, briefing note and presentation for Council (briefing template provided)
- 6.3 Submit to MidCoast Council for noting
- 6.4 Council agree to note the plan
- 6.5 The Local Community Plan is finished and uploaded onto MidCoast Council website
- 6.6 Final Local Community Plan distributed to internal MidCoast Council stakeholders for noting and inclusion in future planning where applicable

IMPLEMENTATION & REVISION

STAGE 7

- 7.1 Undertake review of process with steering group and feedback learnings and improvements to the process
- 7.2 Update Action Plan annually
- 7.3 Review Local Community Plan every four years