

MidCoast Cultural Plan 2036 Reference Group

Background

The MidCoast Cultural Plan 2036 Reference Group was established by resolution 107/19 of MidCoast Council on 27 March 2019.

This MidCoast Cultural Plan 2036 Reference Group is established to provide ongoing strategic advice and feedback to Council, and does not have delegated authority under Section 377 of the Local Government Act 1993.

Purpose

The purpose of the Reference Group is to provide guidance, support and advocacy to ensure the development of the MidCoast Cultural Plan 2036. Specifically, the Reference Group has been established for the purpose of:

1. Identifying and documenting the creative places, creative programs and creative people we have in the MidCoast region.
2. Contributing to Council's strategic planning process in relation to arts and culture.
3. Cooperatively engaging with other relevant bodies including but not limited to Arts Mid North Coast, Destination North Coast and Regional Arts NSW, to gain maximum benefit for the local community and the region.
4. Work with Council, council staff and consultants to help envisage the comprehensive plan which provides an agreed vision, actionable strategies, goals and outcomes for the community and Council, and delivers a platform to enhance the creative places, creative programs and creative people we have in our region.

Roles & responsibilities

Membership

Membership of the MidCoast Cultural Plan 2036 Reference Group shall be comprised of:

- Two (2) councillors;
- Up to nine (9) representatives from key arts and culture sectors such as visual arts, performing arts, musical festival and events, theatre, heritage and libraries;
- One (1) representative from Arts Mid North Coast;
- One (1) representative from Destination North Coast;
- Staff representatives, primarily from Council's Growth, Economic Development & Tourism team.

Additional Membership

The Reference Group may nominate up to two (2) additional persons, if it is considered that additional skills and experience would benefit a specific project or add value to the general performance of the Reference Group.

From time to time, other people who have a clearly defined interest in topics being discussed by the Group may be invited to the meetings to contribute to discussions.

A member's appointment may be ended on the basis of one of the following:

- resignation of a member;
- regular non-attendance at meetings (note: members shall be considered to have vacated their position if they have been absent from three meetings without an apology); or
- failure to respect protocols and confidentiality requirements (set out below)

The reference group will be reviewed within twelve months of its establishment.

Chairperson

The Reference Group shall be chaired by a nominated Councillor. If the nominated Councillor is not available the replacement Chair shall be the alternate Councillor, or if unavailable, the staff representative as required.

Reference Group Members

Industry sector members of the Reference Group will be appointed by Council following a publicly advertised process.

Industry sector members will be expected to bring a strong understanding of the Creative Industries in today's competitive environment, both at a regional and national level.

Members of the group will be drawn from a diverse range of arts, culture and screen stakeholders, with extensive knowledge, experience, and expertise in their respective sectors.

Positions for representatives from Arts Mid North Coast and Destination North Coast will be filled on nomination by the respective organisations.

A nomination form must be completed by interested representatives and all nominations will be assessed against their stated knowledge, experience, skills and responses to the criteria relevant to the Cultural Plan 2036 Reference Group.

Members may determine to work in sub groups (Working Groups) for specific projects. In this case chairs shall be appointed by the Group.

Appointment of all members will be for the period of each elected Council.

Criteria for industry membership

- Currently operating a business within the MidCoast Region or a local resident with specific expertise in an arts and culture related area;
- Strong arts and culture networks and linkages;
- An ability to constructively participate in an advisory capacity;
- An ability to represent a broad range of views that reflect the diversity of the community;
- A strong understanding of contemporary artistic practices both locally and regionally.
- An understanding of the importance of arts and culture in terms of employment, economic development and cultural tourism, for bringing people and visitors to the region.
- A willingness to contribute positively to meetings in a fair and unbiased manner;
- An ability to look beyond personal interests for the benefit of the community and residents of the MidCoast;

- An ability and willingness to encourage participation from and provide feedback to the community regarding arts and cultural development;
- A capacity to commit to the working group for the required duration;
- A willingness to celebrate the success and achievements of the arts and culture sector in the MidCoast region.
- An ability and willingness to operate within council's established values.

Dissolution

Council may determine to dissolve the Reference Group. Such an action by the Council may be initiated for the following reasons:

- the Reference Group has fully achieved its purpose for establishment;
- the Reference Group has become unproductive;
- the Reference Group can no longer maintain membership in lines with the terms of reference;
- the Reference Group activities no longer service the priorities and/or core business of the Council;
- legislation has changed the roles and responsibilities of Council.

Council may remove an individual member of the Reference Group but shall observe the principles of natural justice. Circumstances that may lead to a member being removed may include (but are not limited to):

- If the member engages in serious and wilful misconduct;
- If the member is declared to be not of sound mind;
- If the member knowingly acts in serious breach of the Council's policies in force from time to time;
- If the member breaches any confidentiality or fails to declare a conflict of interest in any matter before the Reference Group;
- If the member is convicted of any criminal offence which prescribes a term of imprisonment or brings discredit upon the Council or the Reference Group;
- If the member fails to attend three or more consecutive meetings without formal leave of the Reference Group;
- If the member is consistently unsupportive of the objectives of the Reference Group.

Commitments

Confidentiality

From time to time, members may be required to review and comment on draft documentation that has not been formally considered by the Council's decision-making body. In these circumstances, it is crucial members understand the status of any documentation and the importance of maintaining confidentiality if they wish to have preliminary input. Discussion may also take place on matters subject to State or Federal Government protocols that need to be adhered to. Members may also be privy to financial, legal or personal information, which cannot be disclosed outside of the group. Each member is required to agree to the confidentiality requirements of the membership.

Meetings

The reference group shall meet a minimum quarterly, at a time and location agreed by the members, for a maximum of 1.5 hours, unless agreed by the group.

A quorum for attendance shall be a minimum of half of the membership plus one. A Council staff member should be present for each meeting.

Meeting Protocols and Principles

The following meeting protocols shall apply:

- members shall respect the role of the Chair in the conduct of the meetings
- members shall respect the right of every member to speak and put forward their views
- members shall respect the Chair's decisions (if a consensus is not able to be reached) in relation to agenda items and timeframes
- meetings are generally run through consensus. Where there is an opposing view the members can choose to have their name recorded in the meeting notes stating their position.
- agenda and supporting documentation will be distributed electronically (by email) at least five working days prior to the meeting date
- meeting notes, providing an overview of discussions and actions to be progressed, shall be taken at each meeting and made available to members within two weeks of the meeting. Minutes will be maintained electronically and distributed to members via email. Minutes shall be made publicly available on Council's website, however, it is recognised that confidential items are not be made public.
- where possible, members shall be notified in advance of any confidential items.
- any items raised outside of these meeting times will be provided to the Chair for consideration for the next agenda.

In addition, the following meeting principles have been developed to guide the Reference Group in their meetings:

- We are inclusive, open minded and respectful of everyone's perspective
- We put our personal agendas aside and provide advice for the greater good of the diverse MidCoast community
- Challenging and exploring are an integral part of what we do and how we operate
- We are solution driven and look for innovative solutions
- We represent and commit to the value of the Reference Group
- We actively participate and engage in the work of the Reference Group
- We are punctual, well prepared, timely with responses and we follow through
- We are realistic about what we can achieve.

Limitations

While the Reference Group may provide guidance to Council on key issues the reference group may not:

- Incur expenditure by Council
- Make any payment to members of the reference group other than the reimbursement of properly incurred expenditure
- Accept public liability risk from another organisation
- Make grant applications dependent on or committing Council to expenditure, either initial or ongoing
- Bind Council
- Become involved in the day to day operations of Council activities

Code of Conduct & Conflict of interest

All members are required to comply with Council's Code of Conduct (copy attached to this document) and participate in Code of Conduct training and an induction provided by Council.

In accordance with the Code, a member of the Reference Group who has a financial, commercial or economic interest in any matter before the group must disclose the nature of the interest to the meeting and must leave the meeting while the matter is being considered.

Contact with the media

Media enquiries relating to the work or operation of the group is to be managed by Council’s Communications team. Media statements cannot be made by members of the Group.

Where a member considers that there should be media comment in relation to any issues discussed by the Group, the member must bring the matter to the attention of the Council staff representative.

Review

An annual summary report which captures the actions of the Group is to be provided each year for inclusion in Council’s Annual Report. Additional reports to Council may also be necessary when key milestones are reached or to progress elements of a specific project or specific recommendations to Council.

Governance

Integrated planning & reporting requirements of Local Government

The scope of work for the reference group is focused on Arts and Cultural Planning.

This aligns with the Integrated Planning & Reporting Framework (shown below and outlined in the Local Government Act). All of the activities of the group need to align with the outcomes in the Community Strategic Plan and subsequent endorsed Council strategies.

Integrated Planning and Reporting Framework

