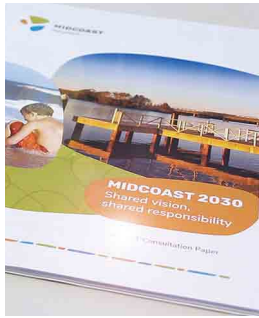


PLANNING AHEAD

After extensive consultation, including workshops, surveys and online polls we've finalised our community's plan for the future.



Our first MidCoast Community Strategic Plan - *MidCoast 2030: Shared Vision, Shared Responsibility* - is available on our website at midcoast.nsw.gov.au/strategy

We use the objectives and strategies in *MidCoast 2030* to develop both our three year Delivery Program and our annual Operational Plan. These documents outline what we will do to work towards making the community's aspirations a reality.

We will soon be sharing our draft Delivery Program and Operational Plan with our community and asking for feedback. Keep an eye on our website for your opportunity to comment.

Customer service relocation

Customers can now access a single point of service for all their council and water enquiries in Forster and Taree.

MidCoast Water Services customer relations teams have settled in the Taree and Forster Council offices. Now we are together in one place, we are working on integrating council and water business to provide you with more efficient and better service.

**MidCoast
Water Services
1300 133 455**

for all enquiries
including
emergencies
and service
difficulties



This move is one of the major integration projects MidCoast Council is undertaking to provide more effective services to the community. The integration of the customer service functions of Council and MidCoast Water Services is a vital step in delivering more efficient services to our customers.

Other than a new location there is little change to the service. MidCoast Water Services accounts can still be paid at Australia Post, online or via Bpay. The 24/7 phone number is still 1300 133 455.

For any council related enquiries, MidCoast Council's customer service call centre number is 6591 7222.



Community

Come along to a community meeting

Community meetings have already kicked off around the MidCoast region, with Taree, Black Head and Old Bar meetings held earlier in April. Come along to hear from our executive staff and councillors about changes to customer service, our call centre, and how we are working to improve access to information for our community.

Also on the agenda will be the timeline for appointing a new General Manager; the potential office consolidation and relocation; improvements to our road network; and our three year delivery program and one year operational plan for the region in the coming year.

These sessions are tailored for your community and include updates on local projects and issues.

Meetings will be held at:

- Wingham** Services Club, Mon 30 April 6pm
- Forster** Council Chambers, Tues 1 May, 9am
- Tea Gardens** Baptist Church, Mon 7 May, 6pm
- Gloucester** Senior Citizens, Wed 9 May, 5.30pm
- Bulahdelah** School of Arts, Thur 10 May, 6pm
- Harrington** Function Centre, Mon 14 May, 6pm
- Stroud** School of Arts, Wed 16 May, 6pm

If you can't make a meeting, watch out for a video of one of the meetings online at: midcoast.nsw.gov.au/communitymeetings



ROADS AND BRIDGES IN THE SPOTLIGHT

We continue to improve the condition of local roads and bridges, with an unprecedented level of works being undertaken through merger funding and savings.

Works in progress now and nearing completion include Blackhead Road at Hallidays Point, Avalon Road near Krumbach, and Gloucester Road near Burrell Creek.

Works will soon commence on Albert Street and Pulteney Streets in Taree, The Lakes Way at the Boomerang Drive intersection, Old Bar Road, Main Street in Cundletown, Thunderbolts Way at The Slips, Manning Point Road and Hannam Vale Road.

With funding set aside from the Special Rate Variation, introduced in July last year, visible improvements to our transport network will continue to progress. High-use assets will be prioritised within this funding program, with a strong focus on renewals that ensure we extend the life of our existing roads, and prevent further deterioration.

What's happening near you? We've added a search function on our website so you can find out about roadworks in and around your area. Type in your address to obtain a map view, and click through for details about what's being done, where it's up to, and when it's due for completion. Visit midcoast.nsw.gov.au/roads

Vibrant spaces make vibrant communities

The Vibrant Spaces initiative, which encourages business owners to add colour, movement, sound and interest along the footpaths, now applies to town centres across the entire MidCoast region, including Forster and Tuncurry.

The concept behind Vibrant Spaces is that businesses use the footpath, free of charge, in return for some innovative thinking and a common sense approach to adding colour, products, chairs and tables onto our streets.

The aim is to encourage people to stop, linger, shop and dine, which not only benefits local businesses, but makes for a more pleasant shopping experience.

Core elements include removing red tape to allow businesses to access the footpath while considering safety and accessibility, and for street activities such as busking and holding not-for-profit community group stalls.

Visit midcoast.nsw.gov.au/vibrantspaces

Improving accessibility

We've recently incorporated text-to-voice functionality across our website, as well as MidCoast Libraries and MidCoast Assist (our ageing and disability service). This technology gives our website users a better online experience and improves accessibility for those with literacy difficulties or reduced vision.

A click of a button allows the page to be read out loud, with the text highlighted as you hear the content. Visit one of the websites to try it out! For more information visit midcoast.nsw.gov.au/readspeaker



Call for volunteers

Help participate in the Gloucester koala field study

MidCoast protects its koalas

Our koala mapping project is well underway across the region - so keep reporting those sightings via the online form at midcoast.nsw.gov.au/koalas

From your reports, we've identified a significant koala hotspot spanning an area from Gloucester to Barrington village and west to Copeland Tops.

We're now looking for volunteers to help us undertake a targeted field study to find out more about this population. To learn more or to volunteer visit midcoast.nsw.gov.au/Gloucesterkoalas