



Rural and natural lands are defining features of the MidCoast Local Government Area.

The planning team at MidCoast Council is preparing a Rural Strategy designed to assist in sustainably managing the use of lands and resources outside our towns and villages.

Read on for an overview of what the Rural Strategy is intended to do, and how it's being prepared.



Spread over 10,000 square kilometres, the MidCoast region is known for its stunning natural landscapes that extend from the coast, through valleys and up into the highlands of Barrington Tops.

Why prepare a Rural Strategy?

Our rural and natural lands contain a diverse range of natural resources and amenities that underpin our lifestyle and livelihoods, and are increasingly sought out by industries and visitors.

Sustainably managing the use of lands and resources outside towns and villages will provide a more prosperous future for all.

Several interests rely on, and sometimes compete for, the shared use of common rural and natural resources throughout the MidCoast. For example:

- Coastal lakes and estuaries are valuable for tourism and recreation, fishing and oyster production, and are sought after for urban development.
- A vast network of rivers and groundwater sources maintain biological diversity and ecological integrity, as well as supplying water for agriculture, industry, and households. Rivers can also be popular locations for camping, boating and fishing.
- Pristine landscapes, both within the public reserve system and on private landholdings, offer biological, ecological or geological specimens of scientific interest, a valuable source of timber, coal and mineral resources, and unique experiences for visitors.

The intent of the Rural Strategy

Once completed, the Rural Strategy will provide a consolidated platform in considering how land and resources outside our towns and villages are expected to be used and developed in the coming decades. It will establish a program of actions Council can take to facilitate the sustainable use of the region's assets.

See over for how you can get involved.



What are we aiming for?

The outcomes we are seeking by preparing the Rural Strategy can be clearly defined across three distinct areas, which include:

1. To establish a unified approach to applying land use zonings and development standards outside urban areas. This will assist Council to amalgamate its planning controls, which are currently set out in three separate Local Environmental Plans and Development Control Plans.
2. To provide locally-relevant guiding principles to support industries that are highly suited to rural and natural lands across the MidCoast. The focus will be on the key sectors and sub-sectors identified through recent strategic economic development initiatives such as the MidCoast Regional Economic Development Strategy (NSW Government initiative), and Council's Destination Management Plan (adopted in 2017).
3. To identify specific circumstances or locations where extra attention may be required to balance competing environmental and/or industrial considerations. This will refer to the agricultural industry maps currently being prepared by the NSW Government for sectors that are already important for the local economy, such as beef, poultry, dairy, and horticulture. It will also reflect the outcomes of a series of focus-group workshops to consider aquaculture and commercial fishing, rural and natural tourism, and other select industries that rely on rural and natural areas.

Related planning controls

The Rural Strategy will predominantly focus on land to which the following zonings do, or should, apply:

- RU1 – Primary Production
- RU2 – Rural Landscape
- RU3 – Forestry
- RU4 – Primary Production Small Lots
- E1 – National Parks and Nature Reserves
- E2 – Environmental Conservation
- E3 – Environmental Management
- E4 – Environmental Living
- W1 – Natural Waterways
- W2 – Recreational Waterways
- W3 – Working Waterways

Other planning controls that may be considered include:

- Minimum subdivision lot size standards in rural areas; and
- Local provisions and environmental overlays to assist with the protection of, for example, drinking water catchments, biodiversity, or scenic landscapes

Get involved

The Rural Strategy is something everyone can provide valuable input on, and we're relying on locals to share their experiences. We encourage you to get involved in its development by:

- Registering your interest by visiting www.midcoast.nsw.gov.au/ruralstrategy
- Having your say on the draft Strategy when it's on public exhibition
- Getting in touch with our project team by phoning 02 6591 7222 or emailing rural@MidCoast.nsw.gov.au



Our five-stage approach

Stage:

Aims to:

1. Research and Investigate

Until end of June 2018

Scope the project, and collect relevant information to use as a basis for discussion

2. Consult and Draft

Until end of October 2018

Formulate a draft strategy by working one-to-one with key stakeholders, holding workshops, and through online surveys

3. Review and Report

Until end of November 2018

Review the feedback and information collated, and prepare reports and other materials for public exhibition

4. Exhibit and Consult

February - March 2019

Publicly exhibit a draft Rural Strategy and seek input from the MidCoast community

5. Finalise and Adopt

By end of June 2019

Finalise the Rural Strategy for Council to adopt and implement



We're zoning in on the zones used across the MidCoast to develop a clear, consistent planning framework that will guide the way we manage land use across the entire region.

The Rural Strategy is part of this overarching project which reviews land use covering zones that include housing, infrastructure and employment.

Find out more and register your interest in being involved at: www.midcoast.nsw.gov.au/zoningin