



Summary of feedback received

A diverse and attractive 'offer'

Collectively, workshop participants listed over 100 reasons to visit rural areas of the MidCoast, including places of significance, enjoyable activities and unique scenic features. The sheer number of reasons given reflects the diversity of the MidCoast landscape, culture, and the rural industries that are enjoyed year-round.

Three broad rural character areas

When sharing insights on what characterises the rural-based tourism industry in the MidCoast participants generally described three broad geographical areas that appear to have shared characteristics from a tourism or visitor perspective. These are:

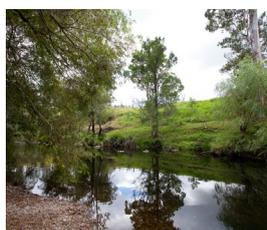
- Coastal Landscape (east of the Highway from the southern to northern extent of MidCoast)
- Rural Landscape (west of the highway leading to the high country)
- Natural Landscape (the high country, roughly from Barrington Tops to Tapin Tops)

We will use these broad areas as a basis for contextualising planning principles in a manner that suits each area's shared characteristics.

Room for improvement

Participants raised many issues they felt could be improved, with five emerging as of greatest concern:

- **Accommodation:** Collectively, the group described a lack of accommodation west of the Pacific Highway and noted that what is currently available isn't appropriate for larger groups. This is seen as a factor limiting the growth of popular tourism activities in the area including mountain biking and weddings, and may limit future activities such as events and festivals.
- **Camping:** Camping was overwhelmingly seen as a popular activity across much of the MidCoast but people felt it could be managed better to ensure visitors respect our unique environment. Planning controls regulating camping are inconsistent and should be more uniformly applied.
- **River access:** The ways in which some people choose to access our rivers can create conflict with private landowners. This can be improved by establishing an approach that can continue supporting the adventure industry whilst respecting landowner interests.
- **Communication black-spots:** Large parts of the MidCoast do not have reliable access to telecommunication. Being "off-the-grid" was considered major a selling point but was also seen as a safety concern for visitors and residents, especially in bushfire and flood-prone areas. A key challenge for planning will be to establish a framework that prioritises people's safety.
- **Road conditions:** Poor road conditions were generally seen as a common issue in all areas and in some parts are a safety concern. Poor roads also diminish the overall visitor experience for people, noting that hire cars generally aren't allowed on unsealed roads.



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.

The workshop

Held in Gloucester on 14 June 2018, the purpose of the workshop was to engage with stakeholders in the rural-based tourism sector, to discuss the challenges and opportunities for development outside towns and villages.

Approximately 40 people attended the workshop.

On the day, the project team delivered a brief presentation on the planning framework that regulates how rural land is used and managed in the MidCoast. Members of the consultant team and Council staff then worked with participants to discuss ideas and issues individually, and through small group activities.

During these breakout activities, attendees offered invaluable insights on what characterises the rural-based tourism industry within the MidCoast and identified several issues and opportunities that the consultant team are considering in more detail, to establish an improved planning framework for our rural areas.

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