

Community Inclusion and Wellbeing Reference Group

Background

The Community Inclusion and Wellbeing Reference Group was re-established by resolution of MidCoast Council on 9 March 2022.

Purpose

The purpose of the Reference Group is to provide strategic advice and feedback to assist Council in making the MidCoast an accessible, inclusive and cohesive community, where all people can participate fully in community life, regardless of their age, ability or background.

The Reference Group reflects the value Council places on our unique, diverse and culturally rich communities as well as our connected community.

The group assists Council to deliver on the following strategies from the Community Strategic Plan:

- Provide equitable access to services, programs, spaces and facilities;
- Strengthen the capacity of our young people to participate and thrive in community life;
- Support the strengthening of social connectedness through programs and partnerships; and
- Welcome people of all abilities and backgrounds.

Key tasks

The Community Inclusion and Wellbeing Reference Group will provide guidance to Council on the following key areas:

- Evaluation and review of Council's plans, strategies and policies regarding community inclusion and wellbeing including the Disability Inclusion Action Plan; Ageing Strategy; Pedestrian Access & Mobility Plan; and Youth Strategic Plan;
- Evaluation and review of Council's integrated plans in regard to community inclusion and wellbeing values, strategies, focus areas and actions.
- Identification of inclusion and wellbeing considerations associated with existing and proposed development activity within the MidCoast community including buildings, road infrastructure, recreation areas and public spaces where potential social impacts have been identified by Council staff and referred to the Reference Group;
- Identification of inclusion and wellbeing considerations associated with Council community projects and initiatives;
- Promotion of community inclusion and wellbeing initiatives within the MidCoast community.

Roles & responsibilities

Membership

The membership of the Reference Group shall comprise:

- up to two Councillors (plus alternate);
- up to eight (8) community representatives that have an interest or expertise in community inclusion and wellbeing including:
 - people with disability;
 - older people;
 - young people (aged 15 - 24 yrs);
 - family members, carers and guardians of people with disability and older people;
 - Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people
- up to five (5) representatives from relevant government and non-government agencies that have a role in providing community inclusion and wellbeing services and/or supports;
- from time to time, other people who have clearly defined interest in topics being discussed by the group; and
- staff representatives, primarily from Council's Community Services team.

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 the protocols and confidentiality requirements (set out below).

Chairperson

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

Committee members

The members of the Committee will be appointed by Council following a publicly advertised process. Members shall be expected to bring diverse knowledge, skills, experience and meet the following criteria.

- Aged 18 years or over, or, if aged under 18 years old, have parent/guardian's permission to participate;
- Currently residing, studying, working or volunteering within the MidCoast Council local government area;
- Demonstrate a commitment to advancing community inclusion and wellbeing across the MidCoast local government area;
- Demonstrate a willingness and ability to actively participate in reference group activities for the required duration in a fair, constructive and unbiased manner for the benefit of the MidCoast community.

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 Community Inclusion and Wellbeing Reference Group.

Council support

To enable the Reference Group to operate effectively Council staff shall provide:

- any material and draft documents to undertake tasks / projects and an opportunity for discussion at meetings (as agenda items);
- regular updates on key projects and activities relevant to the Reference Group's purpose;
- expert advice from the different areas of Council, as required;
- open and transparent communications on community inclusion and wellbeing issues; and
- secretariat services and venues for meetings.

Dissolution

Council may determine to dissolve the Reference Group. This may be initiated for the following reasons:

- the Reference Group has achieved its purpose for establishment;
- the Reference Group has become unproductive;
- the Reference Group can no longer maintain membership in line with its terms of reference;
- Council has determined the Reference Group no longer services the priorities and/or core business of Council; or
- Legislation has changed the roles and responsibilities of Council.

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.

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, however, should the need arise for a vote, only the Councillors and community members shall participate (ie Council staff are not to participate in any voting), having one vote each. Where there is an opposing view the members can choose to have their name recorded in the minutes stating their position;
- agenda and supporting documentation will be distributed electronically (by email) at least five working days prior to the meeting date;
- minutes, 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 to be made public.

Where possible, members shall be notified in advance of any confidential items.

Limitations

While the Community Inclusion and Wellbeing Reference Group may provide guidance to Council on key issues such as corporate policy and objectives, marketing strategy, resource allocation, and decisions, the Reference Group may not:

- on Council's behalf agree to any acquisitions of land;
- incur expenditure by Council;
- make any payment to members of the Reference Group;
- accept public liability risk from another organisation;
- make grant applications dependent on or committing Council to expenditure, either initial or ongoing;
- bind Council; or
- 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 and training, a member of the Reference Group who has a financial, commercial or economic interest in any matter before the group (conflict of interest) 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 are to be referred to and managed by Council's Communications team. Media statements cannot be made by members of the group.

Where a member considers that there needs to be a media comment in relation to any items 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.

The membership and these Terms of Reference are to be reviewed at the end of the Council term, within three months of the Council election.

Governance

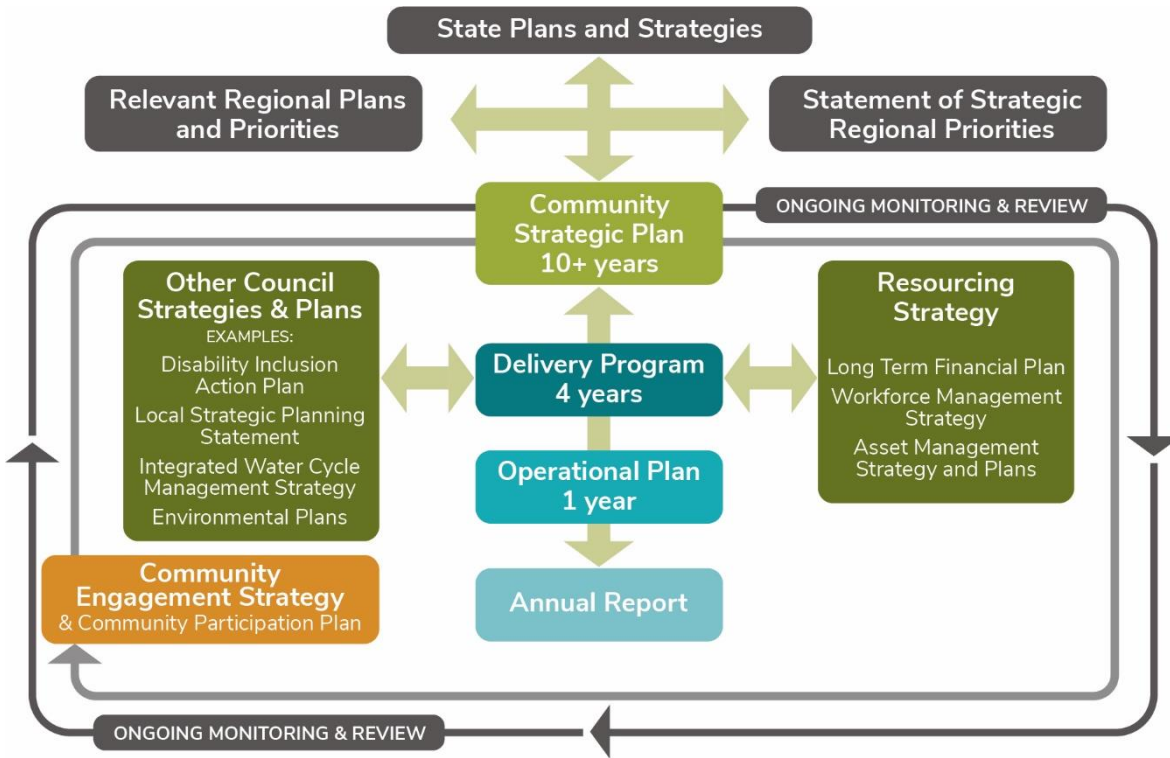
Integrated planning & reporting requirements of Local Government

The scope of work for the Community Inclusion and Wellbeing Reference Group is focused on supporting our unique, diverse and culturally rich communities and our connected community.

The group supports achievement of Delivery Program and Operational Plan strategies, focus areas and actions associated with community inclusion and wellbeing.

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



Attachments - [Policies Library - MidCoast Council \(nsw.gov.au\)](https://www.midcoast.nsw.gov.au/policies-library)

- Code of Conduct
- Gifts and Benefits Policy

Version 2.0 – Increase representatives from relevant government and non-government agencies from four (4) to five (5) – resolution 394/2022