

MidCoast Economic Development Strategy Reference Group

Background

The MidCoast Economic Development Strategy - Reference Group has been established to provide leadership, strategic advice and feedback to Council and the Business Community on the development of an Economic Development Strategy for the MidCoast. It does not have delegated functions under Section 377 of the Local Government Act 1993.

The Reference Group was established by resolution 297/2022 of MidCoast Council on 24 August 2022.

Purpose

The primary purpose of the Reference Group is to provide guidance, support and advocacy to ensure the timely development and adoption of an Economic Development Strategy for the MidCoast Local Government Area.

Specifically, the Reference Group has been established for the purpose of:

- Contributing to Council’s strategic planning process in relation to Economic Development.
- Identifying and documenting Economic Development opportunities, programs and actions required to be undertaken to support economic growth across the MidCoast region.
- Helping create ownership of the final document.
- Cooperatively engaging with other relevant bodies including but not limited to the Department of Regional NSW and Regional Development Australia, to gain maximum benefit for the local community and the region.
- Working with Council and Council staff to develop a comprehensive economic development strategy which:
 - Has a common definition of Economic Development to align expectations, using language everyone can understand;
 - Aligns the views, thoughts and vision of the Business Community and Council;
 - Provides clarity on what projects and actions align with an agreed vision;
 - Identifies major projects for inclusion in a defined “action plan” with timelines and KPIs;
 - Has actionable strategies, goals and outcomes for the Business Community and Council; and
 - Delivers a platform to enhance Economic Development across the region.

- Ensuring that Council and the business community are accountable for delivering Economic Development outcomes for the betterment of the entire MidCoast community.

Roles & responsibilities

Membership

The membership of the Reference Group shall comprise:

- MidCoast Council Mayor
- The President of the MidCoast Business Chamber
- Up to three members from the Chambers (as nominated by the Business Chambers)
- Up to two people from the wider community
- Up to two Councillors

Additional Membership

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

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

Appointment

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, conflicts of interest and confidentiality requirements (set out below)

Administration

A Council staff member is to attend meetings as a non-voting administrative resource.

Staff Attendance

Staff representatives, primarily from Council's Growth, Economic Development & Tourism team will be able to attend to provide updates on the development of the MidCoast Economic Development Strategy.

Chairperson

The Reference Group shall be chaired by a member of the business community.

The Chairperson will be determined at the first meeting of the group.

If the nominated chairperson is not available, the replacement Chair shall be the Mayor.

Committee members

The members of the Reference Group will be appointed by Council following recommendations from the business community.

Members of the Group should be drawn from a diverse range of sectors, with extensive knowledge, experience, and expertise.

Members shall be expected to bring diverse knowledge, skills, experience and meet the following criteria:

- A strong understanding of economic development in the current competitive environment, both at a regional and national level.
- Strong economic development 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 economic development both locally and regionally;
- An understanding of the importance of economic development in terms of business growth and attraction to bring 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 economic development;
- A capacity to commit to the Group for the required duration;
- A willingness to celebrate the success and achievements made in relation to economic development across the MidCoast region;
- An ability and willingness to operate within Council's established values.

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
- funding for external providers to assist with the development of the strategy where necessary and subject to available budget.
- expert advice from the different areas of Council, as required
- open and transparent communications on community inclusion and wellbeing issues
- 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
- 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 and Protocols

The group shall meet regularly, at a time and location and for a duration agreed to by the members of the group.

A quorum for attendance shall be a minimum of half of the membership plus one. 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
- meetings are generally run through consensus, however, should the need arise for a vote, only the Councillors and community members shall participate (i.e. 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) five 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 and are to provide an overview of discussions and actions to be progressed. Minutes shall be made publicly available on Council's website; however, it is recognised that confidential items are not be made public.
- Meetings may be undertaken by teleconference if required
- where possible, members shall be notified in advance of any confidential items

Any items raised outside of formal meeting times will be provided to members via email for discussion and comment.

Limitations

While the Reference Group may provide leadership and guidance to Council on Economic Development 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
- on Council's behalf agree to any acquisitions of land

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 committee are to be referred to and managed by Council's Engagement, Communications and Education team. Media statements cannot be made by members of the committee.

Where a member considers that there needs to be a media comment in relation to any items discussed by the committee, 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

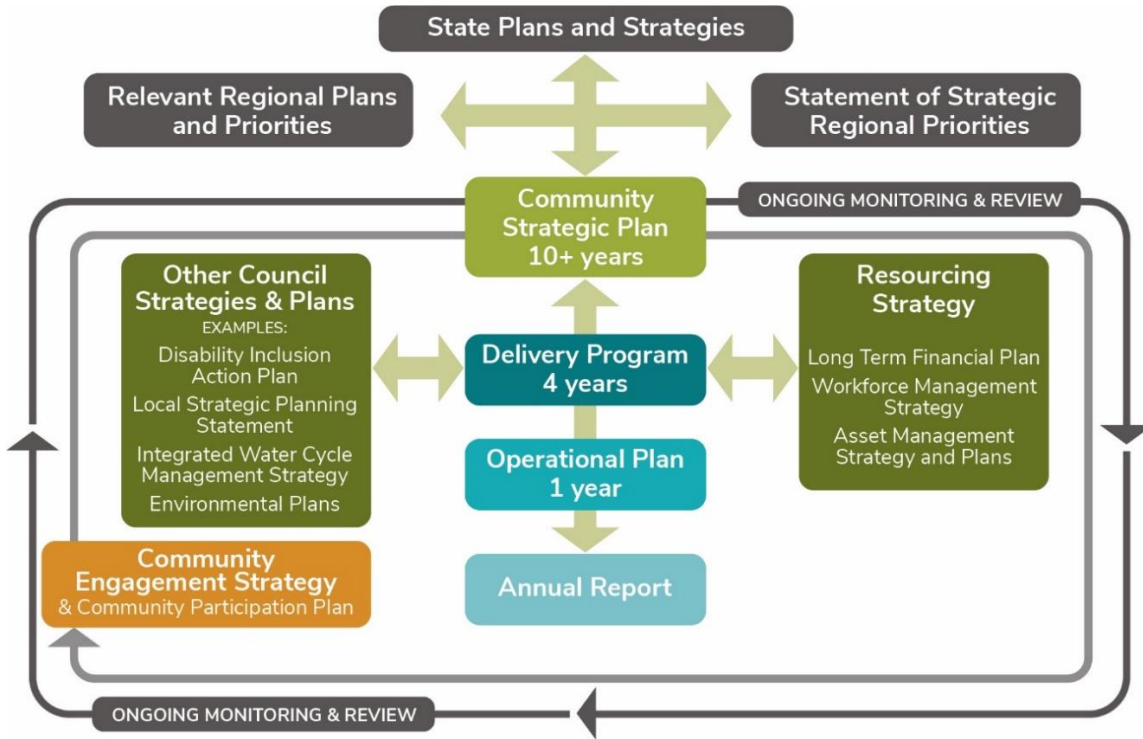
Integrated planning & reporting requirements of Local Government

The scope of work for the MidCoast Economic Development Strategy - Reference Group is to provide guidance, support and advocacy to ensure the timely development and adoption of an Economic Development Strategy for the MidCoast Local Government Area.

Accordingly, the group supports the achievement of Delivery Program and Operational Plan strategies, focus areas and actions associated with supporting our towns and villages through sustainable economic growth.

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

- Code of Conduct
- Gifts and Benefits Policy