

## Heritage Reference Group

The Heritage Reference Group was re-established by resolution of MidCoast Council on 9 March 2022.

### Background

The MidCoast has a strong heritage influence. There are almost 500 heritage items listed in our planning controls (Local Environmental Plans) and 14 heritage conservation areas. Our community is active in preserving our local heritage with nine historical societies and numerous museums documenting and preserving our history and providing a tourist focus.

The Heritage Reference Group will provide a means to work together to promote and preserve our important local heritage.

### Purpose

The MidCoast Heritage Reference Group has been established to provide strategic advice and feedback in relation to protecting and promoting our local heritage by:

- encouraging and facilitating the restoration and retention of places and items of heritage significance
- protecting and improving heritage significant places and items, with particular emphasis on working with landowners, historical groups and the community
- promoting the importance of heritage within the community.

### Key tasks

The MidCoast Heritage Reference Group will provide guidance to Council on

- prioritising areas where heritage efforts should be focused. This includes scoping and providing feedback on strategies, studies, project planning and implementation, and advising on funding opportunities to achieve heritage outcomes
- promoting heritage within the community; to educate, excite and involve the community in heritage retention and restoration. Examples include heritage walks, educational programs and recognition of heritage restoration
- identifying places and items of heritage significance, for inclusion in the MidCoast Local Environmental Plan and appropriate heritage planning controls for inclusion in the MidCoast Development Control Plan
- identifying opportunities to implement and achieve improved heritage outcomes for the MidCoast area.

### Roles and responsibilities

#### Membership

The membership of the group shall consist of:

- up to two Councillors
- representatives from groups including but not limited to: the Manning Valley Historical Society, Tinonee Historical Society, Cundletown and Lower Manning, Manning Historical Society, Wallamba Historical Society, Gloucester Historical Society, Stroud Historical

Society, Bulahdelah Historical Society, Tea Gardens Hawks Nest Family Research and Local History, Great Lakes Historical Society and MidCoast Stories.

- Up to six (6) community representatives who have an interest or expertise in heritage.
- staff representatives from Council's Land Use Planning 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 consecutive meetings without an apology)
- 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 appointed to the group, or if unavailable, the staff representative as required.

### **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 address the following criteria:

- whether they are currently a representative of a Historical Society in the MidCoast area or a local resident with specific interest or expertise in heritage
- community networks with the ability to gather and provide feedback to the community regarding heritage issues
- good knowledge and understanding of local heritage issues
- a willingness and ability to actively participate in meetings 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 community representatives and all nominations will be assessed against their stated knowledge, experience, skills and responses to the criteria relevant to the Heritage Reference Group.

Members may determine to work in subgroups (Working Groups) for specific projects. In this case Working Group chairs shall be appointed by the members.

### **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)
- the services of Heritage Planners or Heritage Advisor to provide heritage expertise
- 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 heritage issues
- secretariat services and venues for meetings
- appropriate insurance cover for Committee members when they are undertaking tasks as agreed by the Committee and Council staff.

## **Dissolution**

Council may determine to dissolve the Reference Group where the Group:

- has achieved its purpose for establishment
- has become unproductive
- can no longer maintain membership in line with its terms of reference
- activities no longer service 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 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 landowner information, which cannot be disclosed outside of the committee.

Each member is required to agree to the confidentiality requirements of membership.

### **Meetings**

The groups shall meet a minimum quarterly, at a time and location agreed by the members, for a maximum of 2 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 members 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 for each community representative and each historical society/group. 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, with the exception of confidential items which are not to be made public.
- Where possible, members shall be notified in advance of any confidential items.

## Limitations

While the Heritage 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
- become involved in the day to day operations of Council activities.

## Code of conduct and 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 Communications 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.

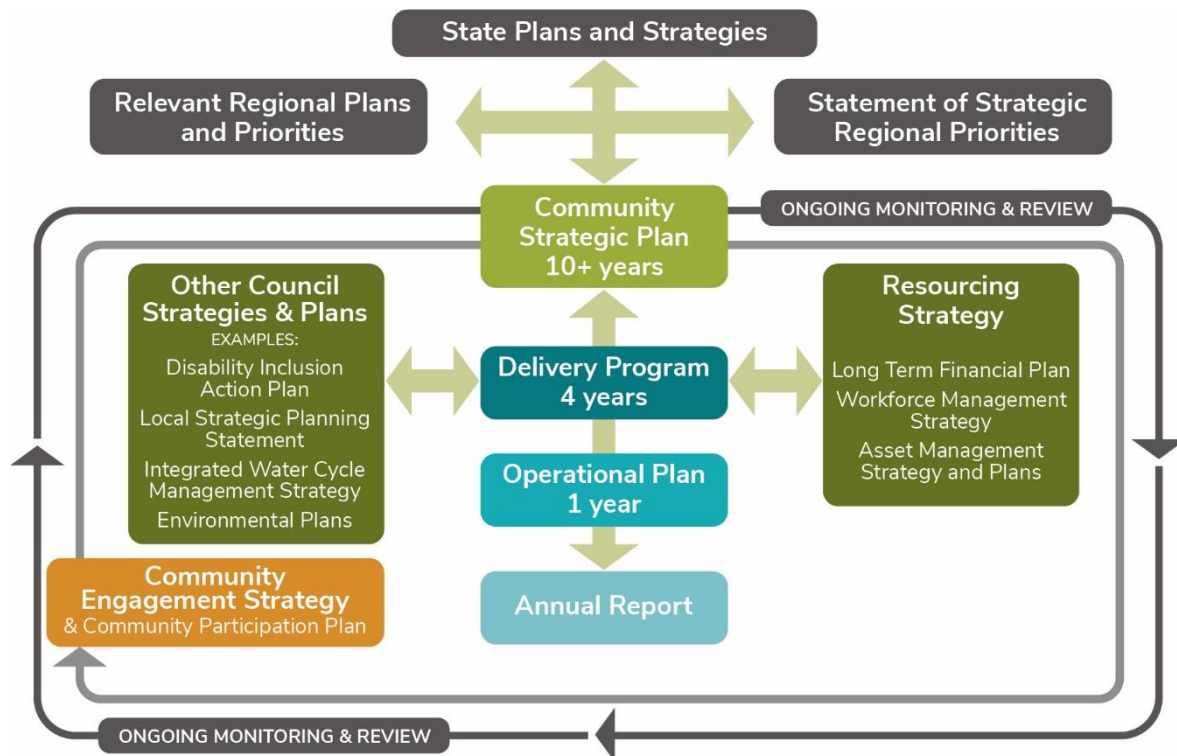
## Governance

### Integrated planning and reporting requirements of Local Government

The scope of work for the Heritage Reference Group is focused on protecting and promoting our local heritage.

This aligns with the Integrated Planning and 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 community representatives membership from five to six – resolution 393/2022