

Community Resilience and Disaster Recovery Reference Group

The Community Resilience and Disaster Recovery Reference Group was established by resolution of MidCoast Council on 9 March 2022.

Background

Multiple disasters (Drought, Fire, Flood, COVID) have impacted the MidCoast Community in recent years. In response, Council has identified the need to develop a broad reference group to work with the community in relation to Resilience and Disaster Recovery. This reference group would undertake similar work to and would replace the Community Recovery Bushfire Reference Group.

The new Community Resilience and Disaster Recovery Reference Group would cover the entire Local Government Area and would work with community members to increase resilience in relation to all potential disasters.

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

Purpose

The purpose of the Reference Group is to provide strategic advice and feedback to assist Council in supporting the MidCoast community in increasing resilience to potential disasters and to support the recovery and renewal process by working with Council to support local recovery efforts for communities impacted by disaster events.

Key Functions

The Community Resilience and Disaster Recovery Reference Group will provide guidance and support to Council in the following key areas:

- Advocacy for specific issues and communities relating to resilience and disaster recovery;
- Providing comment on priorities and resources, and acting as an information conduit between Council and affected communities to ensure that information is distributed to those in need;
- Contributing to the evaluation and review of Council's plans, strategies and policies regarding resilience to natural disasters and recovery from them;
- Contributing to a MidCoast Council Recovery Action Plan;
- Supporting the gathering and sharing of agreed disaster recovery related information following an emergency event in the MidCoast LGA, including the sharing of arising community recovery needs;
- Assisting in informing the wider community of recovery operations and engaging the communities in the recovery process;

- Providing advice for consideration by the LEMO on emergency recovery and resilience issues within the MidCoast LGA;
- Supporting the Regional/Local Recovery Committee (if established) to enhance recovery activities and information sharing within the MidCoast LGA following an emergency event;
- Supporting State/Local Government agencies and community organisations to provide social and economic recovery activities within the MidCoast LGA;
- Promoting 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 six representatives from relevant government agencies and NGOs that have a role in the varying aspects of resilience and disaster recovery
- up to five community representatives from bushfire-impacted areas
- up to five community representatives from flood-impacted areas
- Council's Local Emergency Management Officer
- staff representatives from Council as required

Additional Membership

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

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

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)
- 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.

Committee members

The members 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.

- Community representatives:
 - Are respected and endorsed leaders in their communities

- Have recent experience in supporting their communities in natural disasters
- Are familiar with operating in Committee/Working Group environments
- Government and NGOs
 - Previous formal involvement in mitigation, preparedness, response or recovery processes e.g. contracted to provide services by Government

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 Resilience and Disaster Recovery 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
- 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. 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 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 Reference Group shall meet at 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 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
- Meetings may be undertaken by teleconference if required
- Where possible, members shall be notified in advance of any confidential items.

Limitations

While the Community Resilience and Disaster Recovery may provide advice and guidance to Council on key issues such as corporate policy and objectives, 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 & 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

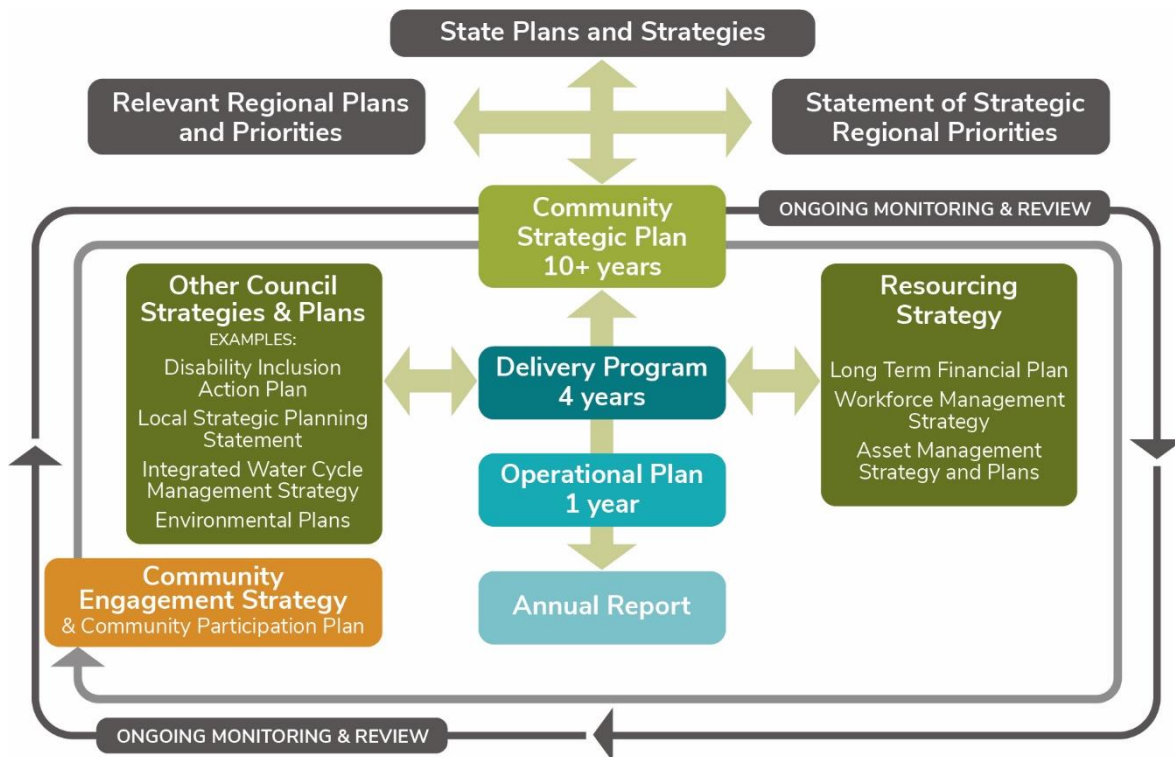
Integrated planning & reporting requirements of Local Government

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.

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.nsw.gov.au/policies-library)

- Code of Conduct
- Gifts and Benefits Policy