



MIDCOAST
council

ANNUAL REPORT

2019-20



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ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF COUNTRY

We acknowledge the traditional custodians of the land on which we work and live, the Gathang-speaking people and pay our respects to all Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people who now reside in the MidCoast Council area.

We extend our respect to elders past and present, and to all future cultural-knowledge holders.





PART ONE

OUR MIDCOAST

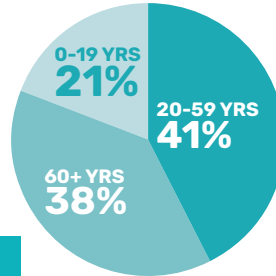
OUR MIDCOAST STATISTICS

10,052 km²

192 km of coastline 

196 towns villages & localities

POPULATION
93,836 (ABSERP 2019)



WORK FORCE
30,038 (NIEIR 2018)

48.8% MALES **51.2%** FEMALES

6,844 BUSINESSES
31,192 LOCAL JOBS
34,906 EMPLOYED RESIDENTS (NIEIR 2019)

52% FULL TIME **46% PART TIME**

 **47,538** DWELLINGS (NIEIR)

 **GRP \$3.41B** (NIEIR 2019)


3,581 km ROADS

 **657** BRIDGES

11 LIBRARIES

000 COUNCIL STAFF

 **13** SKATE PARKS

 **36,100** WATER CONNECTIONS
35,750 SEWER CONNECTIONS

1,700+ VOLUNTEERS

 **84** PLAYGROUNDS

 **30** CEMETERIES

 **26** SPORTING COMPLEXES

58 FULL SIZE PLAYING FIELDS

10 CHLORINATED POOLS

2 OCEAN POOLS 

MAIN INDUSTRIES

-  HEALTHCARE & SOCIAL ASSISTANCE **18.5%**
-  RETAIL TRADE **13.6%**
-  ACCOMMODATION & FOOD SERVICES + EDUCATION & TRAINING **8.6%**
-  CONSTRUCTION **6.9%**

INTEGRATED PLANNING & REPORTING

All NSW councils are required by legislation to develop long-term, medium-term and short-term plans as part of the NSW Integrated Planning and Reporting Framework.

The framework ensures that plans are transparent and easy to understand for the community.

Council's integrated planning documents include the following:

- Community Strategic Plan – MidCoast 2030: Shared Vision, Shared Responsibility
- Delivery Program
- Operational Plan
- Resourcing Strategy (including Long Term Financial Plan, Asset Management Strategy and Plans, and a Workforce Strategy)

Progress Reports on Delivery Program (six-monthly)

The six-monthly progress reports provide Council with an update of our progress against the activities detailed in the Delivery Program.

Annual Report

The Annual Report provides the community, Councillors and staff with a report of work completed by Council during the year, providing a transparent insight into our operations and decision-making processes.

- Focuses on Council's implementation of the Delivery Program and Operational Plan
- Includes information required by legislation



MAYOR'S MESSAGE

I have immense pride in our community. The past twelve months have been a challenging and emotional time with the region impacted by drought, fires, flood and the COVID-19 pandemic. Never has there been a time when our community has risen to the challenges presented and unite to be stronger than ever.

I visited affected communities following the fires and saw first-hand the feelings of despair. At these times it is important to look after our mental wellbeing as well as those of our neighbours, families and friends. It's a timely reminder to ask 'Are you OK?' or 'Can I help you?' We have lived the fear, found strength we didn't know we had, been resourceful and adapted to be able to move forward. Those around us are our support as we are also a support for others. We are and will continue to rebuild one step at a time.

A huge thank you to our volunteers. There are over 1,700 volunteers who help and support the delivery of Council services. In addition, there are thousands of volunteers across our community who make a difference in peoples' lives every day. The MidCoast region would not be what it is without the commitment, dedication and passion of volunteers. I would particularly like to highlight the efforts of our Rural Fire Service who put their lives on the line during the unprecedented fires at the end of 2019. To quote Winston Churchill "Never was so much owed by so many to so few" and this is certainly the case.

In January it was an honour for us to host the Saltwater Freshwater Festival in the region as part of the Australia Day celebrations. Thank you to our indigenous community for coming together in celebration and leading us in our reconciliation journey.

When it comes to improving the roads that connect local communities, MidCoast Council is making significant inroads. In 2019-20 our commitment to improve the roads and bridge network through the \$100 million Roads Program remained strong.

The 2019-20 Annual Report is a snapshot of what has been a challenging year, however, staff have been determined to continue to deliver services and programs for the community.

We have an exciting year ahead, and I believe we are on the verge of a very successful future. I am very proud to be part of this community and to be part of MidCoast Council.

Cr David West
Mayor



GENERAL MANAGER'S MESSAGE

For the past twelve months we have been responding to unprecedented events impacting every corner of our region. Through drought, fires, flood and the COVID-19 pandemic we have remained focused on delivering services to help and support our community.

These events have had a physical and emotional impact across our community. We acknowledge it takes time to heal, recover and rebuild, and we have been walking alongside our community at this time. As an organisation we have adapted and streamlined our processes, to help wherever we can.

Through the drought we implemented our drought response strategy that included the introduction of water restrictions, community education/communication, increased use of recycled water, water carting, and the fast racking of key projects (including the expansion of the Nabiac borefield, Bootawa deep water access and emergency desalination).

Following the fires devastating the region in November 2019 we worked with the Office of Emergency Management and made multiple visits to the communities most affected to provide information about the support available. We also established an internal bushfire recovery taskforce with building, environmental health and waste experts to assist in both the clean-up and development application processes.

Through COVID-19 our priority has been and remains the safety and well-being of our community, staff and volunteers. We have continued to follow the advice of the Australia Government, World Health Organisation and NSW Health in the implementation of measures to help minimise any possible infections.

Council has responded and implemented COVID safe plans across the region and temporarily changed the way we deliver services. To undertake the business of Council we moved Council meetings online, allowing community members to watch from the comfort of their own home.

These unprecedented events of 2019-20 also gave us an opportunity to test and finalise our Business Continuity Plan. This is a document that guides us to minimise the impact on critical business activities should a disruption or emergency occur, enhance our ability to recover, and protect key business activities to ensure services are maintained.

Work on the \$100 million roads and bridges infrastructure program has continued throughout the year. As well as the bigger projects that connect our towns and villages, you'll see

maintenance crews out across the region every day, slashing along roadsides, pothole patching and resheeting gravel roads.

I am looking forward to the year ahead and particularly moving into Yalawanyi Gunyah, our new administration centre in Taree. We have a great team and together we are getting better every day.



Adrian Panuccio
General Manager



OUR MISSION

We deliver benefits for our community
in a way that adds value and builds trust.

VISION

We strive to be recognised as a place of unique
environmental and cultural significance.
Our strong community connection, coupled with
our innovative development and growing economy
builds the quality of life we value.

OUR VALUES

We value... our unique, diverse and culturally rich communities

Our diverse communities offer active and social opportunities and are safe places where we work together with a creative focus, acknowledging our rich history and culture.

We value... a connected community

We are socially and physically connected with each other, by ensuring we have activities, facilities, roads, footpaths and technology that are upgraded and well maintained.

We value... our environment

Our natural environment is protected and enhanced, while we maintain our growing urban centres and manage our resources wisely.

We value... our thriving and growing economy

We are a place where people want to live, work and play and where business is resilient and adaptable to change by utilising knowledge and expertise that supports innovation.

We value... strong leadership and shared vision

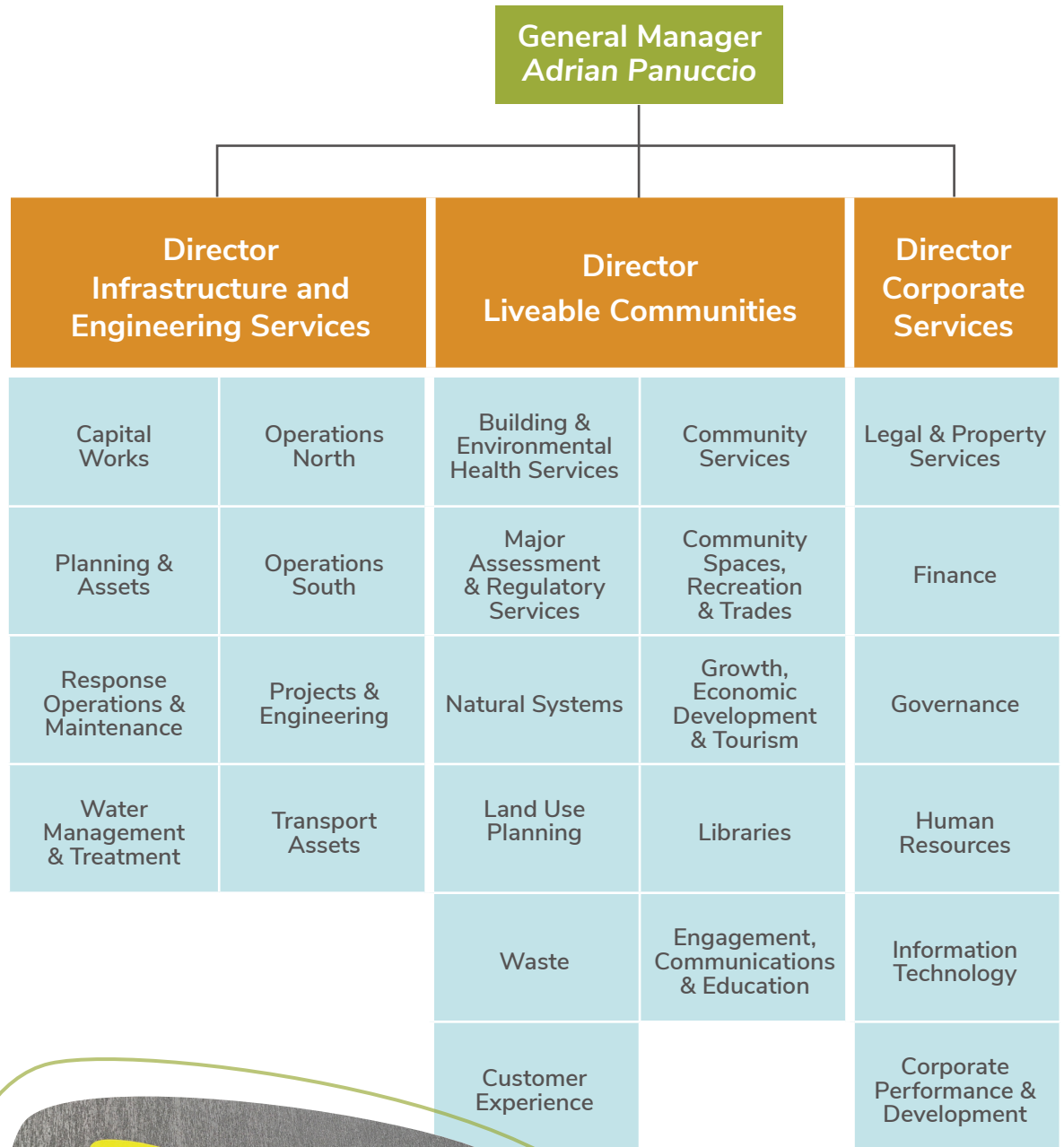
We work in partnerships towards a shared vision that provides value for money and is community focused.



OUR STRUCTURE

Our organisation is structured to effectively deliver infrastructure and services for the community.

The chart provides an overview of how our service areas are represented.



Blue represents functional service areas

HOW TO HAVE YOUR SAY

Council is committed to undertaking ongoing and meaningful engagement with its community and stakeholders.

We engage with community in an effective, timely and transparent manner to foster collaboration, cooperation and increased understanding on issues that affect you, and to ensure that your views are considered in the decision-making of Council.

There are many ways to have your say and contribute to the decisions made in the MidCoast Council area (subject to any health orders).



Vote

for Councillors every four years through the local government election for MidCoast Council



Arrange to speak

at a public or open forum held on Council meeting days



Write to or phone

elected members of Council



Get social

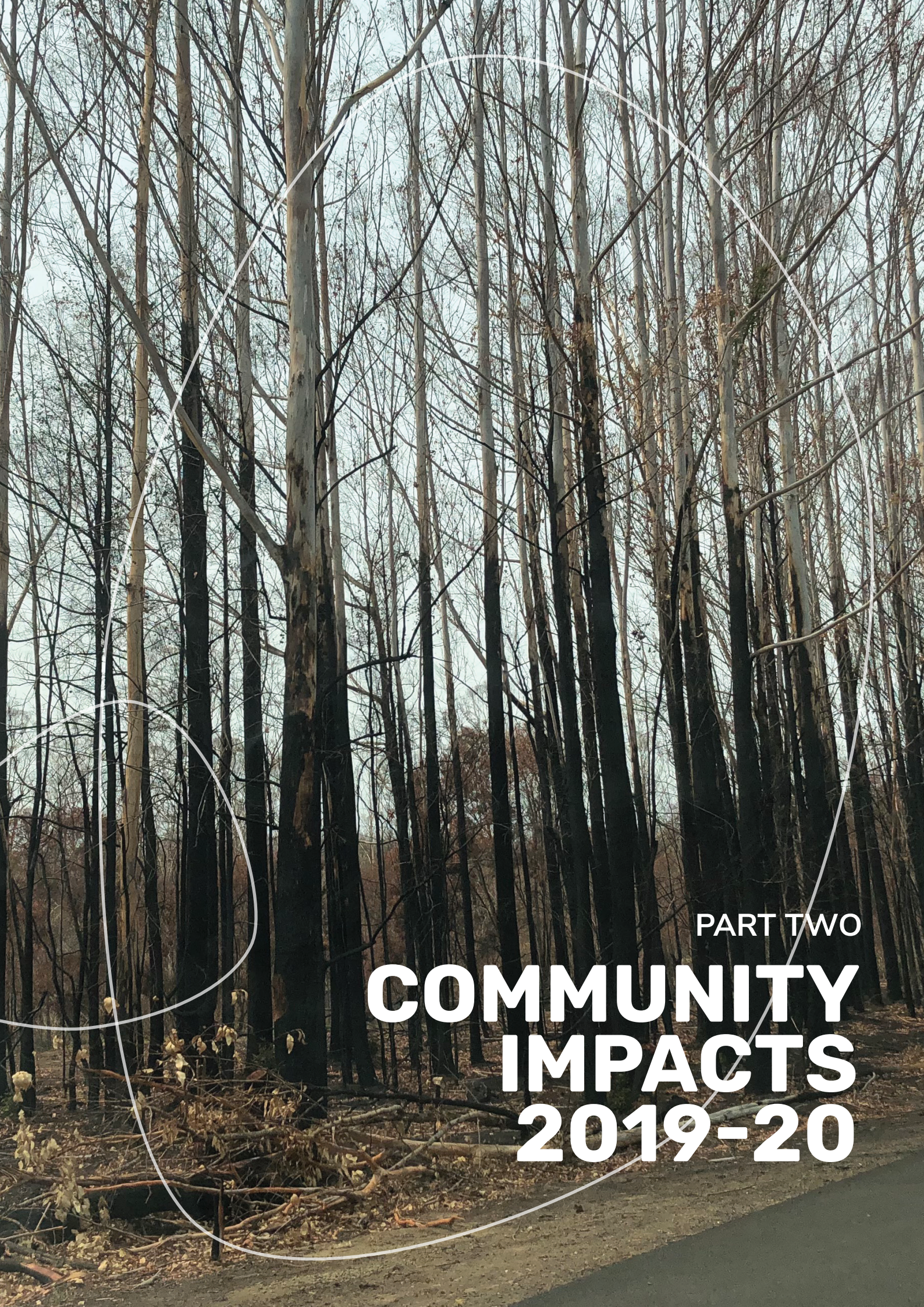
and connect with us through Facebook



Make a submission

on Council's four year Delivery Program including the one year Operational Plan when on exhibition each year, or on the Community Strategic Plan when reviewed every four years.

Make submissions on other major projects or notified consents that are consulted or advertised throughout the year.



PART TWO

**COMMUNITY
IMPACTS
2019-20**

2019/20 DROUGHT

The MidCoast region experienced the worst drought on record during 2019 and into early 2020. The period also saw the longest ever continuous record for no extraction from the Manning River and higher than usual demands due to bushfires and drought.

Our drought response strategy included introduction of water restrictions, community education/communication, increased use of recycled water, water carting, and the fast tracking of key projects (including an expansion of the Nabiac borefield, Bootawa deep water access and emergency desalination).

Drought Response

Early in the drought we formed an internal response team. The role of the team was to:

- Prepare and coordinate the implementation of actions for our drought response strategy,
- Develop and implement water saving initiatives in Council's every day operations so that we demonstrate positive leadership.
- Develop and implement community based initiatives that work with targeted sections of our community and businesses to improve awareness of water conservation, increase resilience during droughts and better manage the economic impacts.
- Develop drought response emergency projects to the point of ready to implement so that minimal time is required for delivery should they be necessary.
- Revise the Drought Management Plan.

During November and December 2019, as bushfires burnt out of control over a large proportion of our area, the levels in Bootawa Dam continued to decline. The forward rainfall outlook was not favourable, with no signs of a change until February 2020 at the earliest. During this time, the team met weekly with the NSW Regional Town Water Supply Coordinator (principal advisor for the Minister for Water on the drought), NSW Health and the Office of Emergency Management to discuss updates on current conditions, bushfire recovery, options for the town water supplies, and government programs. Through this process we finalised our drought response plan and set about delivering actions to ensure the ongoing supply of water to our community.



Actions

A range of actions were delivered, to ensure that the demand for our drinking water supply was reduced. Reduced water use can provide big wins in terms of extending the number of days remaining in a water supply. As less water is used each day, water storages can continue to cater for additional days of demand.

Water Restrictions

- Level 1 (moderate) water restrictions were introduced across the region on 2 September 2019 as part of our staged response plan. This was in line with the triggers in our Drought Management Plan. Level 1 restrictions impact outside water use and aim for up to 10% reduction in demand.
- Level 3 (very high) water restrictions came into effect on 11 November 2019
- Level 4 (severe) restrictions commenced on 25 November 2019. Severe water restrictions eliminate all outdoor residential usage and aim for a 30-40% reduction in demand.
- Restrictions eased to Level 2 (high) on 7 February 2020
- Water restrictions lifted from 21 February 2020

MidCoast Council residents should be congratulated as we already have the 7th lowest water usage per residential property across all local water utilities in NSW.



Manning River at Brett Reserve in December 2019.

Water supply initiatives

A number of short and medium term actions were initiated to ensure that our drinking water supply could meet demand. These included using alternate water sources where possible, carting water where necessary, expansion of the Nabic Borefield and planning for temporary, emergency desalination.

Increased use of recycled water

Alternative water sources were used for some local stock watering during Level 4 restrictions. This further reduced demand on the potable water supply.

High quality recycled water from the Tuncurry Recycled Water Treatment Plant (which is suitable for irrigation with unrestricted use), was transported to various rural properties from mid-January to February 2020 to ensure the health of livestock.

Recycled water for irrigation is used at open spaces in Tuncurry, Hawks Nest, Bulahdelah and Harrington, and for rural properties in Taree, Cundletown, and Wingham.

Water carting

A trial run for water carting was undertaken in November 2019 to ensure the integrity of the water carting process. Water was taken from the Kolodong Reservoir in Taree and successfully delivered to the Gloucester Water Treatment Plant.

As the trial was successful, investigations into water carting by road and rail continued in conjunction with various suppliers, water carters, and train owners and operators. The access road to the Gloucester Water Treatment Plant was upgraded in preparation for the number of trucks per day that would be required if Gloucester had to be supplied by road.

Water carting to Gloucester from Tea Gardens started on 27 December and continued until the end of January 2020. Water carting from Tea Gardens to Stroud, started in late January and finished on 7 February 2020.

Nabic borefield expansion

The Drought Management Response team identified that there were opportunities for increasing the water extraction from the Nabic Inland Dune Aquifer to boost supply to the Manning/Great Lakes Water Supply Scheme. A \$1 Million NSW state government funding grant was quickly approved in response to the initial drought response plan for the works associated with the Nabic borefield expansion. This funding was an immediate boost to Council allowing work to proceed immediately on:

- Lowering of existing Nabic bore pumps
- Installation of four new bore pumps
- Installation of five new pump stations and associated works



Emergency desalination

As part of the drought management response, and in line with our Drought Management Plan and IWCM, the installation of a temporary desalination plant was investigated. This was considered a viable option to implement due to being a reliable, rainfall independent source of supply of water. Some project viability and early planning were undertaken in November and December 2019 with overall approval obtained from the Council on 18 December 2019. After approval, some procurement for the project occurred including 6km of pipe and the signing of a six month contract to hire the containerised desalination units. Some works began on the project in early January 2020. In late January and early February 2020, significant rainfall occurred, water restrictions eased, Manning River flows re-established and Bootawa Dam levels rose. The temporary desalination project was cancelled to limit the costs to Council and community. The overall costs were expected to reach \$14M over 6 months of operation. With cancellation in late January, the costs were finalised at approximately \$4.7M.

Cost of drought

The total expenditure on our drought response was almost \$8.4M.

During and after the drought a total of \$11.52M of financial support for drought response and water security has been provided to Council in the form of the following actions;

- An immediate grant of \$1M from the NSW State Government to expand Nabic Borefield earlier this year.
- Approximately \$551,000 from the NSW State Government funding as a subsidy towards the cost of carting water to Gloucester during January this year.
- Federal Government funding of \$1.47M towards the completion of Stage 2 of the Nabic Borefield Project.
- Up to \$8.5M in further NSW State Government Funding towards our drought response and the completion of Stage 2 of Nabic to achieve short term economic stimulus as part of the COVID-19 response whilst substantially improving water security for the region.

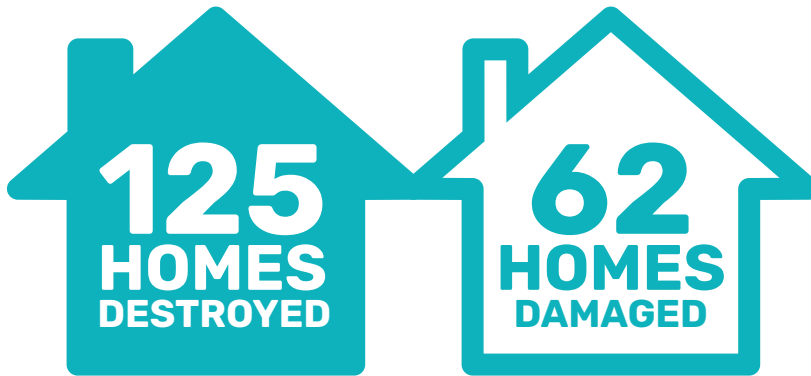


*The Manning River
courtesy of The Manning River Times*

BLACK SUMMER IMPACT ON THE MIDCOAST (NOVEMBER 2019)*



* according to Rural Fire Service building impact assessments



**270 OUTBUILDINGS
DESTROYED**

**129 OUTBUILDINGS
DAMAGED**



HOPE AND RESILIENCE AS WE DIG DEEP TO RECOVER FROM BUSHFIRES

The physical and emotional impact of the November 2019 bushfires on the MidCoast Council area have been far reaching, with our community continuing to work together to heal, recover and rebuild lives and property.

Across NSW, 5.4 million hectares of land was burnt during the 'black summer' bushfires, with 2,439 homes and 26 lives lost.

The MidCoast Council area was hit hard – with a quarter of our land area burnt, 125 homes destroyed and 62 damaged, with one life tragically lost.

The devastating event saw homes, businesses, livestock, grazing land, forestry, crops, machinery and infrastructure lost or damaged. The sheer size and scope of the fires means we are yet to fully realise the long term impacts of the disaster on the environment, the economy and the health and wellbeing of our community.

After being closely involved in the emergency response led by the Rural Fire Service and NSW Police during the height of the fires, Council is now actively working to support residents with the task of recovery and rebuilding.





Bushfire devastation in Old Bar

From 11 November Council closed its facilities and suspended non-essential service to allow key staff to focus on supporting the work of the emergency services as they battled multiple fire fronts across the region, including the significant Hillville and Rumba Dump (later Rumba Complex) blazes.

The Biripi Way site, which will house administration staff from January 2021, was handed over to the Rural Fire Service to use as a staging centre to support the massive fire fighting effort being waged across the MidCoast.

Only days after the fire, Council staff started to work with communities to support their recovery and a disaster welfare assistance point was established by the NSW Government's Office of Emergency Management. This service was supported by Council and transitioned into Council's Pulteney Street office after several months.

In the immediate weeks after the fires, Council and the Office of Emergency Management worked together to run mobile recovery visits in fire affected communities across the MidCoast to provide information about the support available.

Multiple visits were made to the Bobin, Killabakh, Krumbach, Tinonee, Upper Lansdowne, Mount George, Cafferys Flat, Wherrol Flat, Marlee, Moorland, Moorland, Rainbow Flat, Burrell Creek, Old Bar, Nabiac, Tuncurry, Wingham and Hallidays Point communities. Council also worked in partnership with Lions and Rotary to visit these communities most affected regularly, providing support and an opportunity for a chat, cuppa, BBQ or even local entertainment.

Actions undertaken by Council immediately after the fires include:

- Provision of water, generators and essential items to hardest hit communities
- Installation of free water points in Wingham, Tinonee and Krumbach
- The provision of skip bins and metal drop off points in impacted communities to assist with clean-up efforts
- Free disposal of green waste for community members wishing to clean up their yards to protect themselves from fire risk
- Support for BlazeAid to come into the area and start assisting landholders to repair fences
- Support for Taree Lions donations centre in Biripi Way administration building

Supporting the community to rebuild

A focus on helping our community to clean up their damaged and destroyed properties and supporting them to rebuild led to the establishment of a bushfire recovery taskforce within Council very early in the recovery process.

The team includes building, environmental health and waste specialists who worked together to assist in both the clean-up and the development application (rebuilding) process.

During 2019-20 development applications for the rebuilding of homes lost in the bushfires were being approved with an average turnaround time of 10 days.

The taskforce inspected more than 100 bushfire damaged premises over a period of months to support the clean-up and rebuilding process.

To further support the rebuilding efforts of the community, all development application, construction certificate, complying development and septic system fees for those properties assessed as destroyed by the Rural Fire Service's building impact assessment team were waived.

Council also adopted a temporary accommodation policy, to allow for a caravan, or registered or unregistered moveable dwelling to be used on a property once a development consent, construction certificate or complying development certificate is approved.

A voice in the recovery journey

To capture the views, voices and vision of the community for the region's recovery, Council established a Bushfire Recovery Reference Group to play an ongoing role in identifying and establishing recovery priorities.

Council acknowledges that local leaders play a vital part in the recovery and renewal of our community and that they know what is required when it comes to rebuilding their communities.

The reference group is also a way for communities to support each other and take ownership of their own recovery journey, providing a direct voice to local government, helping to shape recovery that meets community needs.



Nurturing our landscape back to health

The recovery of the local environment following the fires has also been a significant focus for Council.

Working alongside community groups, landholders and other organisations, Council teams are undertaking a range of actions in the region to protect and recover natural areas and native species.

This work includes supporting threatened native fauna populations through nest box installation – to provide native animals like gliders, possums and birds with shelter while the bushland recovers, as well as weed control, pest animal control and habitat enhancement.

A partnership with Koalas in Care has been focused on the recovery of injured koalas across the region, including a program to use koala detection dogs to assist in locating sick or injured koalas.

There has also been a focus on reserves and habitat management, particularly Minimbah Reserve and Cattai Wetlands, which were impacted in a range of ways, including tree death, loss of waterbirds and the explosion of annual weeds, which have exploited gaps and openings caused by the fires.

We are also working to deliver a project to minimise and mitigate the impacts of bushfires on sensitive estuary and coastal ecosystems.

This project focuses on the restoration of burnt littoral rainforest, coastal wetlands and other native forest communities located on 2,364 hectares of Council managed land within 35 reserves located in the coastal zone.



Funding to support our community

Three different funding sources have contributed over \$2.5 million to MidCoast Council's bushfire recovery efforts.

The Federal Government has allocated \$1.416 million to the MidCoast under the Bushfire Recovery – Exception Assistance Immediate Support Package funding which is a result of the Natural Disaster Category “C” declaration that applied to the MidCoast Council area. This funding is being administered by the Office of Local Government.

Council has also applied for and received \$250,000 under the State Government's Bushfire Community Resilience and Economic Recovery Fund (Phase 1).

Projects being delivered as a result of the funding include:

Upgrade to the local community hall network

Programs to develop socially resilient communities

Programs to improve disaster preparedness

The development of an online community grants hub / portal

Economic development programs including shop local campaigns, some minor town centre revitalisation projects and business resilience and continuity coaching. A \$913,000 allocation was also provided under the Bushfire Affected Coastal Waterways Program to assist Council to implement post-fire environmental programs, specifically targeting the impacts of bushfires on sensitive waterways.



Killabakh community coming together

COVID-19

During this challenging time our priority has been and remains the safety and well-being of our community, staff and volunteers. We have continued to follow the advice of the Australian Government, World Health Organisation (WHO) and NSW Health in the implementation of measures to help minimise any possible infections.

Council has responded and implemented COVID safe plans across the region and temporarily changed the way services were delivered, to support Federal and State Government measures to reduce the spread of the virus in the community.

18 March

- Manning Entertainment Centre was closed.
- All Council owned pools in the region, including YMCA facilities in Taree, Forster and Wingham were closed

25 March

- Customer Service Centres closed for face-to-face services (online & phone services available)
- All Libraries closed for face-to-face contact (online services available)
- All Visitor Information Centres for face-to-face contact (online and phone services available)
- Manning Regional Art Gallery closed
- Bulky waste collection was suspended
- Playgrounds closed
- Council owned halls and facilities not available for hire

Essential services such as water provision, sewer services, road maintenance and rubbish collection continued.

MidCoast Council commenced live streaming Council meetings during COVID to allow the community to watch proceedings via Council's website.

Once restrictions were introduced in March 2020 MidCoast Council promoted that the community was able to do business, without having to leave home. The customer service team were on hand and available by phone, email and responding to queries made through the website.

The website was updated with information and links so members of the community were able to access and update information 24/7.

Contact us by phone or email - [Go to the contact us page](#)

Pay your rates - [Set up a direct debit, pay online or over the phone](#)

Change your rates notice address - [Use the simple online form](#)

Fill in a form online, or print it out and post it to us - [Go to the forms library](#)

Request a service or report a problem - [Use our simple online form](#)

Track a Development Application online - [Use online application tracking](#)

Get involved on a range of current topics and public exhibitions - [Have your say online](#)

Find out about roadworks in your area - [Council Roadworks](#)



PART THREE

OUR ACHIEVEMENTS

> OUR UNIQUE, DIVERSE & CULTURALLY RICH COMMUNITIES

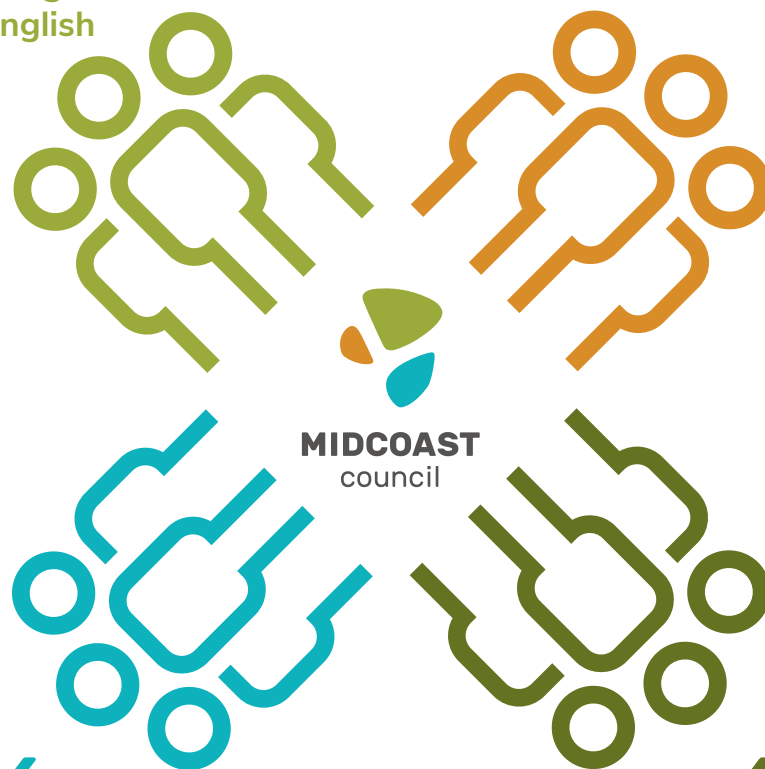
We are 93,836 people, living in 196 unique towns and villages, spread across 10,052km². Our needs, backgrounds, interests, skills, ambitions and aspirations are diverse, and this is reflected in the broad range of services and facilities available across the MidCoast.

2.6%

Speak a language other than English at home

35.8%

of us are over 60 years



9.3%

were born overseas

6.2%

identify as Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander

VARIETY LIVVI'S PLACE OPENED FOR PLAY

After years of planning, consultation, fundraising and construction, Variety Livvi's Place Taree opened for play in December 2019.

This modern, all-inclusive park is part of a national network of inclusive playspaces.

Mid Coast Council, Variety – the Children's Charity, Touched By Olivia, the NSW Government Everyone Can Play Program, Newcastle Permanent Charitable Foundation, along with local service clubs and businesses came together to make sure every child can be included in play in the community.

The playground, located at Fotheringham Park Taree, combines clever design and engineering, accessible amenities and surrounding facilities to give people of all abilities a fun and challenging place to play side-by-side. It will be a special place where everyone can enjoy the benefits of belonging and being an active part of the community.

"The new playspace provides a much needed facility for all children in our community"

DAVID WEST
MIDCOAST MAYOR

"What an amazing place, there's something really special about it and I'm so pleased for the wider community who will be able to enjoy it."

STEPHEN BROMHEAD
MEMBER FOR MYALL LAKES



MIDCOAST ASSIST

MidCoast Assist continued to grow throughout 2019-20 in terms of number of ageing clients and NDIS participants who accessed our service. Most of the referrals to MidCoast Assist came through word of mouth. Some of the nicest things we heard was from people who referred themselves to MidCoast Assist after they saw how our staff interacted with other clients in the community. What a wonderful compliment that is to the frontline staff of MidCoast Assist.

Due to COVID, we had to adjust how we delivered services during the year. In order to keep people safe but connected, instead of group activities we initiated virtual experiences using zoom and group chats. To reduce the risks for our older clients we took grocery orders over the phone and collected and delivered their orders personally. For clients who opted to minimise contact or who couldn't participate in social activities, we kept up regular phone calls to check on their well-being. All of our staff were trained in infection control procedures and COVID, made sure everyone had access to the protective equipment and hand sanitizer and cleaned and disinfected frequently.

During the year with a special grant from the Commonwealth we were able to provide technology to 50 older members of our community that best suited their needs. We teamed them with 'tech buddies' who are providing ongoing trouble shooting and tech support. The value of this initiative during the COVID 19 lockdown was recognised by the Commonwealth who have provided further support to expand the project. We also provided 116 pieces of equipment to people over 65 years of age in the MidCoast region to assist them with mobility and personal safety.



Dawn Haynes who lives in the small community of Allworth near Stroud is a client of our Active and Older service took the time to share her thoughts about the service. Here are some of the things she said:

“...I cannot give enough praise to Kathy Mort and her volunteers...Kathy always greets us with a smile, she is always so helpful and happy and whatever worries we have she helps us work through them making phone calls, appointments and arranging volunteers to help with doctors and other visits necessary...Without this service there would be a few of us who would have to go to nursing homes or back to bigger towns. MidCoast Council is to be congratulated for organising the MidCoast service... It isn't just a job it comes from the heart wanting to help us – for this I am truly grateful.”

Kathy and Dawn



Based on the wonderful feedback from Dawn and her friends in Allworth we are developing a strategy to better meet the needs of people who live in small and isolated communities in the MidCoast region.

DISABILITY SERVICES



AGEING SERVICES



LIBRARIES

Nabiac library refurbishment

Thanks to a successful grant application MidCoast Council Libraries received \$58,000 for a significant refurbishment of Nabiac Library.

The project involved repairing the floor, installing new carpet, repainting of the interior, replacement of shelving, signage, children's furniture, display boards and office furniture, electrical work and the introduction of a new public PC. The project was completed well ahead of schedule and public feedback has been very positive. The community appreciated the new look and feel, whilst retaining the original 'flavour' of the building.

MidCoast Library Survey says a lot

In 2019-20 Council undertook a Customer Satisfaction Survey and the results were outstanding. 1,108 responses were received, with 95.39% of respondents rated the overall service as 'Very good' or 'Outstanding' and 97.98% rating the customer service as either 'Very good' or 'Outstanding'.

The significance of the Library in enhancing community well-being can be found in individual responses, such as:

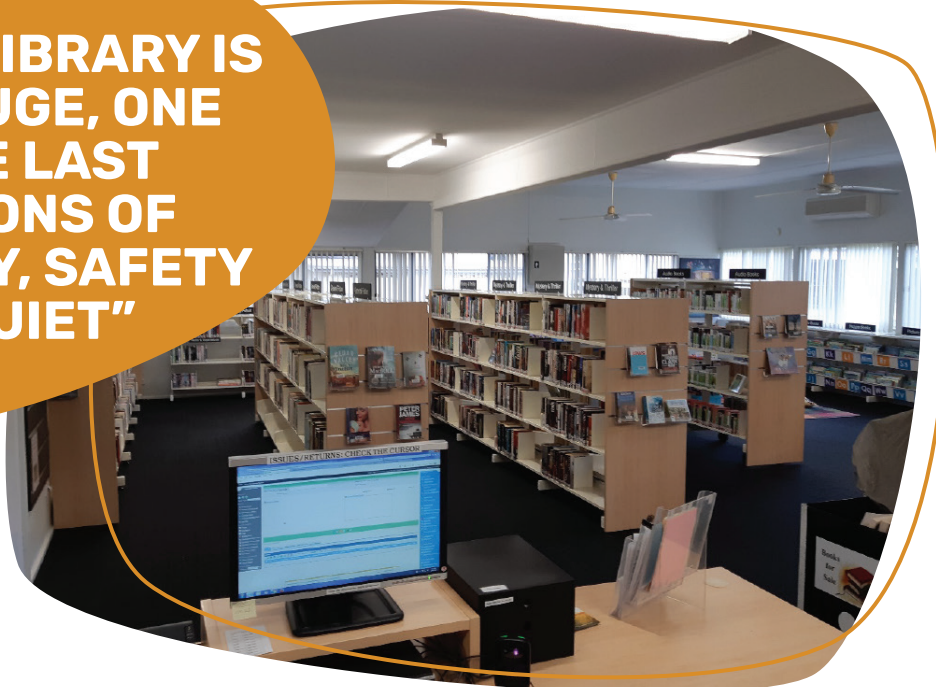
'The library is a refuge, one of the last bastions of sanity, safety and quiet.'

'Necessary to my well-being'

'An end to my loneliness'

The results of the survey were backed up in council's wider survey, which saw the Library receiving a 97% satisfaction rating.

**"THE LIBRARY IS
A REFUGE, ONE
OF THE LAST
BASTIONS OF
SANITY, SAFETY
AND QUIET"**



Grant funding for Wingham

MidCoast Council Libraries and Wingham Library, in particular, were big winners in the State Library's 19/20 grant funding round. MidCoast Council applied for \$500,000 for a major works project at Wingham Library, and were successful. This is the largest amount of grant funding through this competitive process that has ever been awarded.

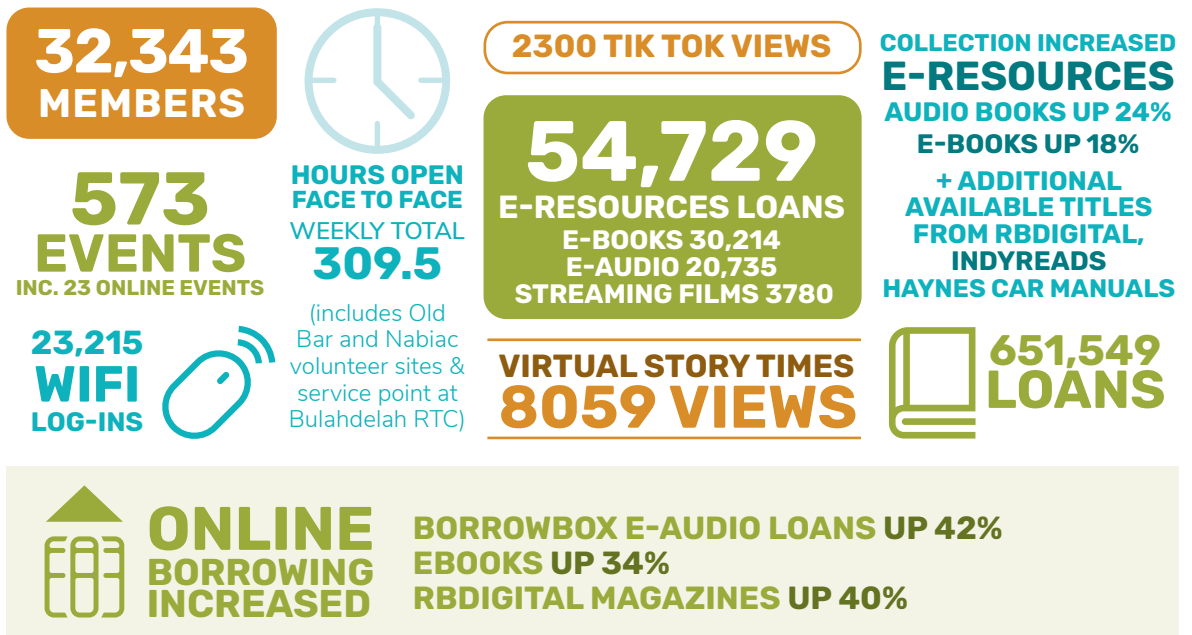
Key features of the project include the installation of a lift to make the first floor fully accessible and an extension to the rear of the building. The Library will increase from 243 m² (below the minimum benchmark) to 442m². This represents a total increase of 199m², making the Library 82% larger.

In addition to the expansion the building will be re-carpeted and re-painted, furniture and shelving will be updated and the upstairs area will be fitted out to create a relaxation and study area as well as having the functionality to hold events.

This project will dramatically expand and transform the Wingham Library, whilst still retaining all its heritage value.

Library in the COVID Environment

The Covid-19 pandemic did force MidCoast Council Libraries to close their doors for a significant part of the last quarter of 2019/20. Recognising the important role the Library played in residents' lives they launched on a major enhancement of its online services. This included new online databases, a substantial increase in eBooks and eAudio titles and the provision of online storytime and author events. The Library plans to maintain these new services into the future and for as long as they remain popular with the community.



VOLUNTEERS

MidCoast Council has over 1700 valuable volunteers that change communities and change lives.

There are many opportunities for volunteers across MidCoast Council – from beautifying parks and reserves, to providing valuable support at libraries, art gallery and the entertainment centre, along with many other roles in community services, tourism, reference groups, heritage and graffiti removal.

Whether volunteers have a passion for the performing or visual arts, a knack for gardening, a love of their local area to share with visitors or are simply able to offer companionship and assistance to older residents or people living with a disability, there's a role for everyone at MidCoast Council.

Volunteers enhance the services we deliver in many ways – they make things better, add a human touch, bring new skills and talents and in some areas, provide a service that simple wouldn't exist.

The generosity of spirit, the sense of community and the willingness of MidCoast locals to roll up their sleeves and donate their time and effort to help others or 'make things better' sets us apart from other communities.



VOLUNTEERS WEEK

National volunteers' week is an annual May event. This year's plans to thank our volunteers with morning teas in four locations were impacted by the pandemic and had to be cancelled.

Council's volunteers received a personal thank-you letter from the Mayor and a video of the Mayor thanking volunteers was posted to the website and Facebook page.



**“We get a buzz out of keeping the area tidy and we get to meet new people in the area. We take a lot of pride in looking at the area after it has been mowed plus we get a lot of positive comments from the community about how good the estate always looks”
Bob Martin explained.**

YOUTH

Youth Action Plan

The need for youth-friendly spaces is a high-priority strategy in the Youth Strategic Plan. A survey was developed and rolled out during youth week to support the completion of actions relating to identifying and promoting youth-friendly spaces. Youth week, normally occurs annually in April, however, was postponed due to the pandemic.

A Wellbeing Map for the Manning area was completed and will be updated on an ongoing basis. This map was created to help inform the Headspace service model. Headspace is being provided in the Manning area as an election promise by Federal Member David Gillespie. Wellbeing mapping for the Gloucester and Great Lakes regions is being undertaken.

Live n Loud

Live n Loud events were held through the year, with some live-streamed due to health orders in place. The MidCoast Youth Action Team (MYAT) who plan and run the events were also able to update the MidCoast Youth social pages to contribute to the success of the live-streamed activities.



MANNING ENTERTAINMENT CENTRE

The Manning Entertainment Centre entered its 4th decade of operation in 2019 providing a diversity of entertainment up until COVID-19 regulations enforced the temporary closure of all venues in March 2020.

These have been unprecedented times for the industry. However, prior to the closure, 68 vibrant performances had been held since July 2019 ranging from the Melbourne International Comedy Festival and comedians such as Arj Barker, to the Yamato Japanese drummers, contemporary dance and music, Taree Arts Council productions and National Theatre Live Film screenings.

Our delivery of services has continued with adjustments made and collaboration between staff from different sections of council to make it a success.

During the period of the closure the MEC produced a series of videos 'Behind the Curtains' and set up a Youtube Channel where these videos and past performances can be viewed. The videos reveal the intricacies required to bring exciting and sometimes eccentric entertainment to the MidCoast community. Stories and sneaky peaks of what's happened are recounted.

Plans for the Centre to reopen in September 2020 to smaller audiences are well underway with the MEC now being a COVID Safe business that will socially distance all patrons within the theatre and adhere to the COVID Safe Plan developed. The dedicated team of staff and volunteers have undertaken COVID-19 safety training and the MEC team are eager to welcome back our loyal patrons where there will be a focus on presenting local and live entertainment from the MidCoast region.



MANNING ENTERTAINMENT CENTRE

The Friends of the MEC program grew by over 150% in 2019 and work has commenced to boost awareness and promote an exciting new season, the “Make it to the MEC” public awareness campaign will be launched locally.

Planning for the new studio space for the black box theatre is well underway with the DA being prepared to submit September 2020.

The MEC assisted with the development of the Cultural Plan following the establishment of a reference group and consultants were engaged.

Masterclasses were available to local students when flutist Jane Rutter performed at the MEC in late 2019. Technical workshops were presented in September with the Manning Youth Action Team that culminated in a Live n’ Loud event in the MEC foyer. Regular venue tours were also conducted throughout the year with various community groups.



friends
OF THE MEC

13,225
TICKETS
SOLD



1,257
VOLUNTEER
HOURS



40

VOLUNTEERS

PERFORMANCES THIS YEAR

54 EVENTS 63 PERFORMANCES 20 FILM SCREENINGS



MANNING REGIONAL ART GALLERY

Many hands come together to make the Manning Regional Art Gallery a vibrant cultural hub, fostering community engagement with the arts and nurturing innovative artistic practice.

Building enhancements

The Regional Cultural Fund (\$80,000) with support of MidCoast Council (\$45,000) and the 'Friends of the Gallery' (\$35,000) has seen the completion of access improvements to the Gallery and a new Artist-in-residence studio space.

Total project cost \$160,000

Challenges become opportunities

The Gallery team was able to continue delivery of services despite bushfires and COVID. November 2019 saw the region plunged into an unprecedented bush fire season. Taree became a refuge and although not directly impacted by the fires, roads were cut throughout the region and for the safety of staff and the public the Gallery was closed for 7 days, a first in its 30-year history. After the most devastating week in November the Gallery reopened and became a safe haven for those who had been impacted by the fires. The community used the safe and cool space of the Gallery to share stories, have a cuppa, debrief and weave stories of the area with Aboriginal elders as part of the Saltwater Freshwater Aboriginal Art Award and Cultural Object Touring exhibition (photo attached).

Fast forward to March 2020, and the Gallery temporarily closed its doors to the public due the COVID-19 pandemic. This brought about a new set of challenges for the Gallery team, which we skilfully approached with creativity, turning the challenge into an opportunity. We redirected resources and collaborated with other sections of council to increase our digital platform and continued to engage with our audiences in new ways.



MANNING REGIONAL ART GALLERY

2019 NAIDOC week celebrations

Chatham High School held their NAIDOC celebrations at the Gallery in 2019. Artworks from students were featured in the Front Window Display and shown in conjunction with Jason Wing's exhibition What binds us... The dancers performed for a large crowd of family, friends and community in the front grounds of the Gallery.

Exhibition highlight

The Forgotten Works of Pixie O'Harris

This exhibition of oil on plywood paintings by Pixie that used to hang in the Manning Hospital from the 1957 to the 1980s proved to be an outstanding success. Interest and visitors came from far and wide to view the works

which had been in storage at the hospital and recently restored by a volunteer conservation team led by our own Tracey Golds. The paintings featured scenes of fairy tales and Australiana and brought back many memories for the viewers.



So many positive comments and feedback from community members and a few from our visitor's book:

"LOVE THE PIXIE O'HARRIS EXHIBITION; WELL WORTH THE TRIP FROM SYDNEY"

"EXCELLENT EXHIBITION & LOVELY GIFT SHOP"

"BEST EXHIBITION I'VE EVER SEEN!" (RUTH DOWNES)

"AN OASIS, THANK YOU!"

THE CULTURAL PLAN

The MidCoast Cultural Plan 2036 Reference Group was first established in 2019 to provide guidance, support and advocacy to ensure the development of the MidCoast Cultural Plan 2036 and continued to operate throughout 2019-20 financial year.

MidCoast Council is developing a Cultural Plan to strengthen our community and invigorate our local economy. After the recent fires, floods and continuing pandemic, cultural identity and community ties are more important than ever. The first round of community engagement had been planned for March 2020, however, with COVID-19, we moved most of the resourcing allocated to these events online, creating virtual opportunities for the community to have their say. Our team also spoke with locals by phone and zoom meetings with targeted external stakeholders, to receive valuable feedback.

The future of arts and culture in our region is bright thanks to the time, insights and energy of the more than 650 community members who took part in setting the foundation for the MidCoast Cultural Plan 2036. During May and June, our community shared their thoughts with us online and made it clear that the MidCoast community wants to see arts and cultural activities supported in the region. For the MidCoast, arts and culture is a way to attract visitors, support the local economy, create great places, and look after the health and wellbeing of our community. The MidCoast Cultural Plan is all about how we can use our unique location, natural beauty, and resourceful community to make the region an even greater place to live or visit - ultimately helping to build our resilience into the future. The MidCoast Cultural Plan 2036 continues to be developed and will be completed in 2020/21.



HERITAGE

Throughout the MidCoast we are surrounded with reminders of our proud indigenous, pioneering, agricultural and maritime history. Along with a group of passionate volunteers, local historical societies, and Heritage NSW, we continue to celebrate our heritage and preserve the past for our future generations.

Local Heritage Fund

This year we provided a 'helping hand' to 17 owners of heritage places through our annual Local Heritage Fund (jointly funded by Council and Heritage NSW). Works undertaken to homes and commercial buildings saw landmarks from our past restored to their former glory. Projects included painting part of the Great Lakes Museum and repairs to or painting of a number of heritage houses in Taree, Stroud, Wingham and Tuncurry.

Restoring our War Memorial

With funding from the NSW State Government, we undertook restoration works of three important War Memorials. The Vampire Jet at Wingham underwent a structural assessment, repairs, clean and paint to ensure it will be available for future generations to enjoy. The Taree War Memorial Clock stairs were re-tiled to improve safety and refresh the access to the memorial. Nabic Park War Memorial involved restoring the lower panels and repairing lead lettering.

MidCoast Stories

We are proud to support this exciting initiative developed by local volunteers, Janine Roberts and Penny Teerman. The MidCoast Stories website is a collection of short, factual and often quirky stories that has grown through contributions by the local community. MidCoast Stories is also home to the historical rates books for the former Taree Municipal Council, Wingham Municipal Council and Manning Shire Council. Transcribed by volunteers into searchable tables, they are a great resource for anyone looking for information about their home or family history.



ZONING IN ON OUR FUTURE

A robust planning framework helps up protect our natural resources, manage urban settlement, support our economy, and fairly distribute services, facilities and open space across the entire region.

Like all NSW councils, when it comes to town planning and land-use in our region, we're required to work within a legislative and well-documented framework. But unlike most other councils, we're currently working from three different frameworks – one for each of the three former regions – and that's confusing for everyone! A key task over the next three years is to consolidate our planning controls, not only for consistency across the region, but to ensure they are contemporary and future-proof.

During 2019-20, we checked-in with the community about the future zones for our urban areas, being our towns and villages. From 5 February until 9 April 2020, we held information sessions in 19 locations across the MidCoast, had around 700 people discuss their properties and neighbourhoods, and over 9,000 people visit our website. We received over 370 submissions that are being looked at in detail. Feedback was sought on:

Draft Housing Strategy – aims to provide a planning framework for residential land that is responsive to the character of our towns and villages, addresses the needs of our future population and allows for a mix of housing choices.

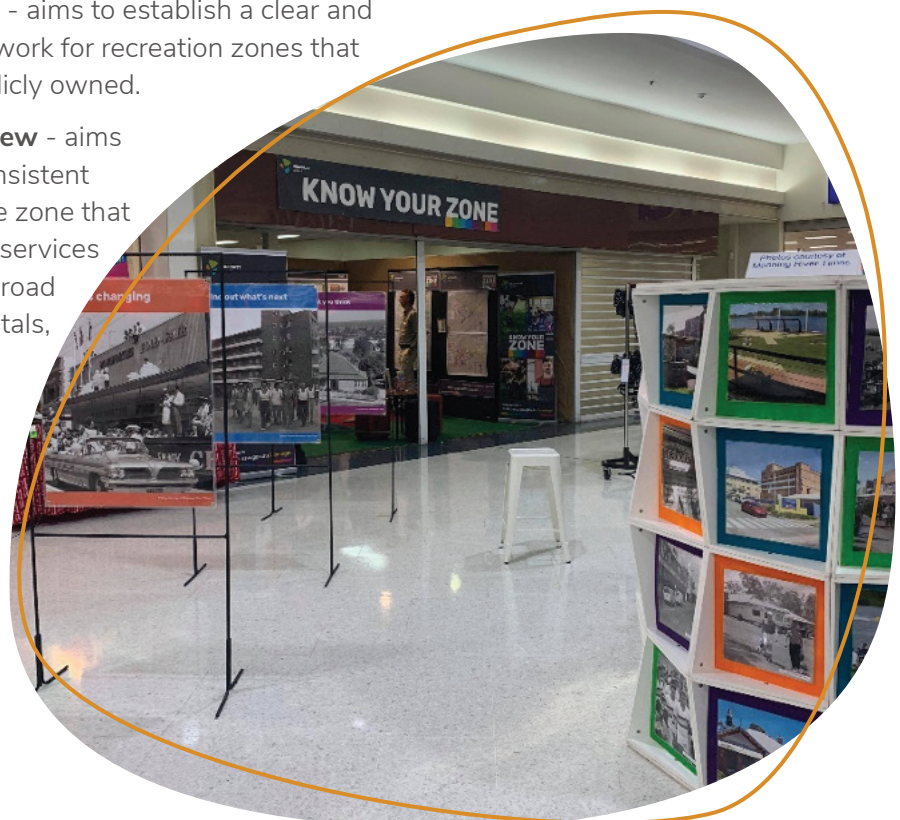
Manning Health/Taree CBD Precinct Plan – examines the future expansion of medical and support services for the Manning Hospital, additional business and residential opportunities and urban design improvements in the Taree CBD.

Employment Zones Review - aims to establish a clear and consistent planning framework for employment zones, being the business and industrial zones that accommodate over 10,000 local businesses.

Recreation Zones Review - aims to establish a clear and consistent planning framework for recreation zones that are both privately and publicly owned.

Infrastructure Zones Review - aims to establish a clear and consistent planning framework for the zone that accommodates a range of services and facilities like our State road and rail links, airport, hospitals, cemeteries and water and sewage services.

Work on the Rural Strategy progressed this year and will be available for community consultation in 2020-2021.



NATIONAL SORRY DAY AND RECONCILIATION WEEK

National Sorry Day held 26 May annually is a day to share and reflect on the stolen generations. MidCoast Council partnered with Pluto Entertainment to bring a special event to people at home with a live stream acknowledging sorry day. The live stream was a very emotional journey and well received by the 1,200 viewers.

Following Sorry Day, National Reconciliation Week was held between 27 May – 3 June. MidCoast Council again partnered with Pluto Entertainment to bring 7 days of live-streamed events for reconciliation week. The events ranged from vocal performers, band performances, rap performances, didgeridoo sounds and traditional weaving, Aboriginal art tutorial and teaching of the local traditional Aboriginal Language, Gathang. The week closed off with a grand concert, a conglomeration of all performers and emcee comedian Dane Simpson. The whole week together with National Sorry Day reached just over 20,000 views (combined views from youtube and facebook).



GLOUCESTER NAIDOC EXHIBITION

MidCoast Council worked with Gloucester Arts and Cultural Council to hold a NAIDOC exhibition leading up to and during NAIDOC week. While NAIDOC week was postponed to November due to COVID, this exhibition continued as planning was well underway.

The NAIDOC Exhibition was well-received and enjoyed by the 584 people who visited with approximately 70% being visitors to the area. While the COVID-19 lockdown impacted the lead up, making it uncertain for the artists, attendance at the exhibition was above expectations.



The mixture of contemporary and more traditional pieces made it a very interesting collection of works. The Gallery were grateful to Ken and Kim Eveleigh for the loan of a diverse collection of work, as well as Dorothy Stokes, The Gloucester School of Arts and Georgia Britton for their generosity in loaning their private collections of Indigenous art.

ABORIGINAL ACTION PLAN FOR MIDCOAST

Work commenced on the MidCoast Council Aboriginal Action Plan, to strengthen connections with the wider MidCoast Aboriginal community.

The Aboriginal Action Plan will focus on Council's strategic goals and projects/initiatives for recognising and respecting Aboriginal culture and history and reducing disadvantage experienced by the MidCoast Aboriginal community.

Council asked for feedback from the community through a survey, to help form a better understanding of the way services are provided across the region and to better identify the needs of the local Aboriginal community.

From language and resources to employment opportunities and education, the survey provided a snapshot of the areas that need improvement locally.

"We're committed to building positive relationships and respect between Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal people across the MidCoast."

PAUL DE SZELL
MIDCOAST COUNCIL'S DIRECTOR
OF LIVEABLE COMMUNITIES.



> A CONNECTED COMMUNITY

Our physical and social connections are key to our strong sense of community. It's our infrastructure and facilities, and services delivered by people who work with and alongside council, that connect us. Among others, it's our roads and bridges, water and sewer connections, recreational facilities and our rangers.

**3,581km
ROADS**



657 BRIDGES

**1,058
DAs
DETERMINED**

**VALUED AT
\$381M**



**36,100
WATER CONNECTIONS**

**35,750
SEWER CONNECTIONS**

**900
COUNCIL
STAFF**



**84
PLAYGROUNDS**



FOCUS ON OUR ROADS AND BRIDGES

\$5.333 million was levied in 2019-20 for the allocation to existing road work programs and for the payment of existing and future borrowings undertaken to fund Council’s \$50 million contribution to the \$100 million Road Upgrade program outlined below.

At 30 June 2020 \$5.156 million of funds remain restricted for these purposes.

During the year Council allocated \$1.782 million to renewal works on the road network being:

- Urban Rehabilitation - \$586,175
- Rural Resurfacing - \$586,175
- Rural Rehabilitation - \$500,000
- Regional Resurfacing – \$110,000

Council also repaid \$1.265 million of principal and interest on loans taken out for roadworks projects from the former Great Lakes Council and under the Road Upgrade Program.

There were no new borrowings taken out during the 2019/2020 financial year under the Road Upgrade Program..



ROADS 3,581KM

347KM OF REGIONAL ROADS

548KM OF URBAN ROADS

950KM OF RURAL SEALED ROADS

1,736KM OF UNSEALED ROADS



BRIDGES 657

417 CONCRETE BRIDGES

**240 TIMBER/COMPOSITE
BRIDGES**



Top right:
Gloucester Road upgrade

Bottom right:
Work on Cedar Party Road

FOCUS ON OUR ROADS AND BRIDGES

When it comes to improving the roads that connect local communities, MidCoast Council is making significant inroads. MidCoast Council's commitment to improve the roads and bridges network in 2019-20 continued with the \$100 million Roads Program.

As well as the bigger projects on the roads that connect our towns and villages, you'll also see maintenance crews out across the region every day, slashing along roadsides, pothole patching, and resheeting gravel roads.

In 2019-20 over \$10 million was invested in upgrades as part of the \$100 million Roads Program to:

- The Lakes Way (Rainbow Flat) resurfacing projects
- The Lakes Way (Mayers Flat) 225,000sqm urban / 285,000sqm rural
- The Lakes Way (Tarbuck Bay)
- Gloucester Road (Killawarra)
- Wingham Road (Kolodong)
- Old Bar Road (Saltwater Road intersection)
- Old Bar Road town centre
- Avalon Road (Krumbach)
- Gloucester Road (Burrell Creek)

In addition to the money invested in the \$100 million Roads Program, over \$7 million was spent on rehabilitating the following roads:

- Crawford Street (Bulahdelah)
- Primrose Street (Wingham)
- Beach Street and School Lane (Harrington)
- Muldoon Street (Taree)
- Helen Street (Forster)
- Maxwell Street, Motum Ave and Witt St (Tea Gardens)
- Queen Street (Gloucester)
- Bulga Rd
- Hannam Vale Rd
- Waukivory Rd

\$5 million was allocated for urban

- Callaghans Creek Bridge
- Milbai Bridge
- Kundle Creek Bridge
- Burrell Creek Bridge



**Comboyne Road
BEFORE**



**Comboyne Road
AFTER**

'Ongoing maintenance for our old timber bridges is particularly expensive so replacing them is a much better long term financial outcome but also contributes to a safer, more reliable transport network'

DANIEL PARK, MANAGER OPERATIONS NORTH,
MIDCOAST COUNCIL

WATER SECURITY

MidCoast Council operates five water supply schemes

- Manning/Great Lakes Scheme
- Nabic Water Supply Scheme
- Bulahdelah Supply Scheme
- Stroud Supply Scheme
- Gloucester Supply Scheme

The largest scheme is the Manning/Great Lakes Scheme. The main storage for this scheme is Bootawa Dam which holds 2300 ML. This is equivalent to approximately 90 days storage or unrestricted usage. The dam is kept full when possible. When the low river flow limit is reached (in accordance with the water sharing plan), we are unable to extract water to fill the dam. After this, the volume in the dam decreases each day as water is drawn to supply demand.

The Nabic Water Supply System (which also supplies water to the Manning/Great Lakes Scheme) has increased the water security of the scheme. The yield from the borefield was initially lower than anticipated due to the drought and the cease to pump rules within the Environmental Management Plan (EMP). We obtained an exemption during the drought, which allowed us to temporarily operate outside of the EMP. We are in the process of revising the EMP with the Natural Resource Access Regulator based on the body of data that has accumulated since investigation of the scheme. This will provide a greater window of operation for the scheme in future drought periods based on our recent experience.

Bulahdelah and Stroud operate in a similar way as the Manning/Great Lakes scheme in terms of storage; however, they have a marginally higher number of days storage. The Gloucester scheme has no off stream storage with only the reservoirs providing storage. The Barrington River had not been known to flow at lower than 6 ML/d. The Tea Gardens scheme draws from a coastal sand aquifer and has good capacity as well as security, although water quality will deteriorate when the aquifer is under stress.



OUR WATER, OUR FUTURE

Every day millions of litres of water are pumped from the water supply system to people's homes.

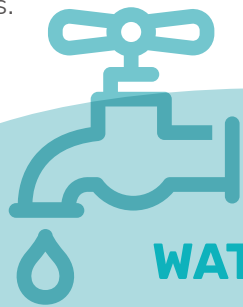
One third of the water is used outdoors, and the rest is used inside – for washing, cleaning, showering, cooking and flushing the toilet. But where does all this water go once it disappears down the drains, pipes and plugholes in our home?

In urban areas the wastewater, or sewage, is pumped to the local sewage treatment plant, where water is treated so it can be returned to the water cycle. MidCoast Council operates 15 sewage treatment plants across the Manning, Great Lakes and Gloucester areas.

These plants range in size, from big plants such as the Forster Sewage Treatment Plant and Dawson Sewage Treatment Plant to smaller facilities for communities such as Manning Point, Stroud and Harrington.

All our sewage treatment plants treat water to a tertiary level and operate under licence from the NSW Environment Protection Authority (EPA) which sets standards for the treated water returned to the environment from the plant.

Over recent years many of our sewage treatment plants have been upgraded to provide a higher level of treatment and to be able to cope with growing populations – particularly in coastal areas.



WATER MAINS = 1,402 KM

SEWER MAINS = 1,141 KM

36,100 WATER CONNECTIONS

35,750 SEWERAGE SERVICE CONNECTIONS

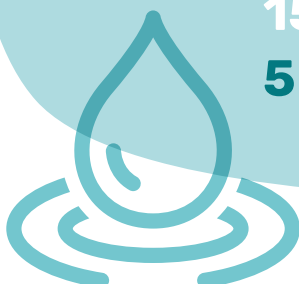
43 WATER PUMP STATIONS

11 BILLION LITRES PER YEAR

SERVICING 40,000 HOMES AND BUSINESSES

15 SEWAGE TREATMENT PLANTS

5 WATER TREATMENT PLANTS



PARKS & OPEN SPACE

Sport is such an important part of our lifestyle on the MidCoast, and with over 3,000ha of parks and open space being managed across the MidCoast our team are busy year-round ensuring parks are ready for the next sporting activity or event.

From hockey and netball, soccer, football and more, the grounds are used by thousands of MidCoast locals as well as visitors to the region. Our region is home to a great range of sporting grounds and fields, some of them first-class facilities that host representative tournaments used by people from all over Australia.



PARKS & OPEN SPACE

MidCoast's younger residents have benefited from shade being installed at playgrounds over the past twelve months.

The playground shade program was funded thanks to a NSW Government Stronger Country Communities Fund grant of \$550,000.

MidCoast Council manages 86 playgrounds across the region, with 10 identified as high use / regional parks, and the remainder either categorised as high use district parks, or lower use neighbourhood parks.

Playground upgrades are a planned activity that focuses on maintenance and providing structured or natural shade over playground equipment and improving accessibility to play equipment.

Over the past year, shade upgrades have been completed at:

- Providence Bay Park, Hawks Nest
- Lone Pine Memorial Park, Tuncurry
- Palm Grove Park, Forster
- Billabong Park, Gloucester
- Allen Park, Stroud
- Coolongolook Oval, Coolongolook



Top: Coolongolook Oval

Bottom: Providence Bay Park Tea Gardens

SPORTS FIELDS IMPROVEMENTS

Sports fields across the region have had lighting installed.

The lighting makes a big difference for the teams that train on these grounds, allowing training to continue past the early sunset that occurs on winter afternoons.

The grounds are now able to be used at night, benefiting local sports and allowing for uses such as catch-up games and new competitions.

Sports field improvements include:

- Cundletown Sports field
- Lansdowne Sports field

Both received 4 new 25m high galvanised lighting poles with LED lights and a Halytech Control system for remote operation and monitoring to track usage, replacing outdated and non-compliant lighting.

- North Tuncurry Sports Complex – Peter Barclay Rugby Union Sports field lighting
- Gloucester Rec 1 sporting oval
- Wingham Tennis Club

Upgraded with LED lights and a Halytech Control system for remote operation and monitoring to track usage, replacing outdated and non-compliant lighting.



SHOWGROUNDS

Stroud Showground

Following the 2015 floods, Stroud Showground has been upgraded with funding provided from:

Durallie Mining Funds	\$550,000
NSW Govt. Disaster Relief Funding	\$1,153,144
Federal Govt. Community Developments Grant	\$100,000
Lions Club of Stroud contribution	\$45,000
Total Project Funding	\$1,848,144

New Infrastructure includes

Stroud Tennis Courts: 3 x new astro turf tennis courts.

Stroud Tennis Clubhouse: New tennis clubhouse, including kitchen, storeroom, fully accessible toilet, ambulant toilet and viewing verandah.

Poultry Pavilion: Holstein Poultry pavilion purpose built with internal racking for chicken cages.

Multi-purpose Building: New Multi-purpose building 40x18m, including commercial kitchen, storerooms, unisex accessible amenities, male & female toilets, cool room, kiosk, fully air conditioned, bar area overlooking the bullring arena. Pavilion area 30 x 18m



Nabiac Showground - Aub-Ferris Clubhouse

The Aub-Ferris Sports Complex at Nabiac now boasts a renovated Clubhouse. Home to the Wallamba Bulls Rugby Union Club and the Wallamba Soccer Club, the ground is well used during winter months.

The purpose built sporting clubhouse includes a brand new canteen, change room with shower facilities, fully accessible bathroom, referees change room, function room / meeting room, and viewing area, providing extra comfort for sportsground users. store rooms. A verandah also provides an undercover viewing area, providing extra comfort for sportsground users.

The storage shed was also purpose built for use by each of the sporting groups to securely store sporting equipment as well as an area for MidCoast Council outdoor staff to house equipment & materials to fully maintain the sporting fields all year around.

AMENITIES UPGRADES

Fishing Tables

Upgrades to fishing tables at Manning Point Foreshore and Endeavour Park, Taree provide low maintenance, resilient fish cleaning facilities using reinforced concrete design. Design features include running water and flat tables to achieve hygienic surfaces, and the use of durable recycled plastic cutting table material.



Forster Main Beach BBQ Shelter/Ocean Baths

Stage one of the Forster Main Beach Masterplan was completed and opened just in time for the Christmas school holidays.

The upgrades include:

- 8 berth amenities block, including unisex toilets
- store room for mudcrabs group
- accessible toilets
- ambulant toilets
- These works were completed thanks to funding of \$200,000 from the NSW Government's Stronger Country Communities Fund with additional Council funds of \$250,000.



AMENITIES UPGRADES

Little Street, Forster

An upgrade to the Little Street bus shelter and public amenities in Forster has improved the visual amenity in a scenic location.

- reskinning the exterior walls to improve the facility's visual appearance
- new roofing incorporating the bus shelter
- wide seating steps as a resting place and link with the walkway
- new equal access toilets
- fresh tiles
- new plumbing fixtures
- energy efficient LED lighting

The works were undertaken thanks to a \$100,000 grant from the NSW Government and a Council contribution of \$53,219.

Fotheringham Park, Taree

As part of the Livvi's Place all abilities play space installation in Fotheringham Park, the amenities were upgraded.

This included:

- new amenities block with parent's room
- male/female toilets
- unisex ambulant toilet
- fully accessible lift, privacy curtain & change table



> OUR ENVIRONMENT

Our region spans over 10,000 km² and boasts the world heritage Barrington Tops mountain range at its highest point.

We're famous for our forests, waterways and beaches. We have 58 national parks and 63 state forests, nature reserves and conservation areas. Our lands are watered by 38 rivers including the only double delta in the southern hemisphere and the state's tallest single drop waterfall. We also enjoy an incredible triple lakes system and over 190kms of pristine coastline.

We are committed to protecting our stunning natural environment.




58
NATIONAL
PARKS



200m
DROP
ELLENBOROUGH
FALLS



192km
of coastline
(10% OF THE NSW COASTLINE)



261km
MANNING RIVER

5 COASTAL LAKES & LAGOONS
MYALL, WALLIS, KHAPPINGHAT, SMITHS & BLACKHEAD



1 MARINE PARK
PORT STEPHENS
GREAT LAKES



4 WETLANDS
BULAHDELAH, CATTAI,
DARAWANK, MINIMBAH CREEK

1 INTERNATIONALLY RECOGNISED WETLAND - MYALL LAKES



YOUR ENVIRONMENTAL LEVY AT WORK

The Environmental Levy rate was used to meet our community's MidCoast 2030 priority to protect and enhance our natural environment.

During the 2019-20 financial year the environmental rate raised a total of \$4.114 M. The funds were used as a platform to attract additional investment valued at over \$1.6M, from a range of funding partners including the NSW Environmental Trust, NSW Marine Estate Management Strategy, Landcare Australia, NSW Coast and Estuary Program and Rescuing our Waterways.

Expenditure was allocated to key focus areas including:

- Water quality improvement and estuary management
- Catchment Management
- Natural Areas management and biodiversity
- Sustainability
- Support staff/program costs and overheads
- Ongoing maintenance of council's bushland reserves
- Developing an asset management system for Council bushland reserves
- Vegetation mapping at Gloucester, coastal wetlands and littoral rainforest
- Development of a climate change policy, mitigation plan and adaptation plan
- Townsend Street Wetland, Forster refurbishment

Some of the projects delivered or underway include:

- Karuah Catchment Management program implementation – working with farmers to improve water quality and ecosystem health.
- Sealing and improving gravel road creek crossings
- Riverbank restoration Wallamba and Lansdowne Rivers
- Waterway Report Card
- Manning Estuary and Catchment Management Plan development including catchment risk assessment and stakeholder consultation
- An audit, cleaning and upgrade of Gross Pollutant Traps in Taree, Harrington, Wingham and Forster.
- A Memorandum of Understanding was signed between MidCoast Council and NSW Local Land Services to foster a cohesive, partnership approach to natural resource management.

These projects and more are helping to protect the natural values that support the healthy, outdoor lifestyle enjoyed by the MidCoast community.

The Natural Systems team works closely with the community to protect our precious flora, fauna and waterways.



CELEBRATING OUR WATERWAYS

Healthy catchments and waterways are vital systems that keep our communities thriving and Council undertake regular monitoring to see how healthy they are. The 2019 ‘Waterway and Catchment Report Card’ was prepared using data from an independent assessment undertaken in conjunction with experts from the Department of Planning, Industry and Environment.

The results in 2019 showed local waterways holding steady, with 13 sites maintaining their grade from 2018, four sites increasing their grade and just one site dropping a grade. Sampling took place during one of the driest periods on record resulting in good water clarity due to the minimal amount of catchment runoff entering the system. At some sites algae increased as the dissolved nutrients in the system and the abundant light provided suitable growing conditions.

A Catchment Celebration was held in conjunction with the release of the Report Card results with the community offered the chance to participate in a number of different hands on activities.

Over 300 people attended the “Lakeside Living Museum”, held in Pacific Palms the family friendly event was a celebration of our waterways bringing together science, history and culture. With interactive information stalls demonstrating scientific monitoring and highlighting local wildlife, biodiversity and cultural walks, interactive catchment board game, Indigenous dancing, community artwork and more there was something for everyone to enjoy.

A further six interactive events were held highlighting the importance of biodiversity, ecosystem services, catchment management and their link to water quality. This included an evening looking at local wildlife, a tree planting day, and a walk through a regenerating wetland.

The Report Card Project raises awareness of the importance of local water quality and the partnerships required for effective catchment management. In 2019 the results of the monitoring project was enhanced by providing the community with fun hands on activities to help them connect to and protect our waterways.



Families enjoyed learning about aquatic ecosystems at the Lakeside Living Museum

LASTING PARTNERSHIPS TO PROTECT THE KARUAH RIVER

The health of a river is generally the culmination of the surrounding impacts that occur throughout its catchment. Things like unsealed roads, or impacts from clearing or agriculture, allow nutrients and sediment to slowly make their way across the land when it rains or through little creeks and drains down into the main trunk of the river – and in the case of the Branch and Karuah Rivers, into Port Stephens.

Issues like this are complex, far-reaching and expensive to address. To tackle this wicked problem in the Karuah River catchment, an innovative partnership between local farmers, Midcoast Council, Hunter Local Land Services, Landcare Australia and Karuah Great Lakes Landcare is beginning the journey to improve the health of the Karuah River through the Karuah-Borland Landcare Program.

To address this, the program has provided financial incentive grants and advice to 8 landholders on neighbouring properties in The Branch to fence-off wetlands and riparian vegetation, install off-stream water points and rehabilitate gully-lines. 270 hectares of wetlands and 50 hectares of riparian vegetation have been protected and allowed to regenerate through this program, helping to keep the Karuah river clean.

The project partners have contributed over \$550,000, including \$214,000 from Midcoast Council, which is in turn being matched by the farmers themselves through their own cash and in-kind labour.

This Grants program is just the beginning, and further projects to improve the health of the Karuah River will continue to roll out next year through the Karuah-Borland Landcare Program.



Farmer Bryan Royce shows Geoff LeMessurier from partner agency Hunter Local Land Services the fencing on his project which is keeping his cattle out of the wetland.

HELPING HAND FOR BUSHFIRE RECOVERY

The severe bushfires of 2019 seriously impacted our communities and caused far-reaching personal, economic and social harm. They also had a damaging impact on our natural environment. We, along with other agencies, organisations and the community, were at the forefront of bushfire recovery efforts to assist, protect and restore the natural environment and biodiversity.



A red-necked wallaby and water dragon visit life-saving water stations installed by MidCoast Council.

During the period from October to December 2019, over 20% (over 200,000-hectares) of the MidCoast region was affected by wildfires. Some of these were of very high intensity. Major outbreaks, known as the Rumba Complex, Hillville, Bills Crossing / Crowdy, Minimbah Road and Woko fires impacted our communities including Bobin, Killabakh, Old Bar, Possum Brush / Rainbow Flat and many others. The impact on native plants and animals, natural areas and local waterways (from pollution caused by ash and sediment laden run-off) was severe.

Council staff were involved in emergency environmental response measures such as undertaking monitoring and surveys for Manning River helmeted turtles and other aquatic animals in bushfire-affected streams and assisting FAWNA and other organisations provide emergency water and food in fire-impacted landscapes. We provided information to the community in relation to the care and protection of native wildlife.

We also developed a Bushfire Emergency Environmental Response Plan, which evaluated the impacts of the fires on native plants, animals, vegetation types and public reserves. It identified the priorities for restoration action across the MidCoast Region. Species such as the koala, long-nosed potoroo, reserves such as Minimbah council land, Cattai council land, Talawhal Nature Reserve, Killabakh Nature Reserve and the vegetation type, littoral rainforest, were all identified as recovery priorities in our region. We have undertaken extensive wildlife monitoring and delivered weed and feral pest animal control programs in fire-affected areas. We have partnered with FAWNA to provide and install nesting boxes in burnt areas to assist native wildlife.

Council also engaged with our community on bushfire recovery effort and actions, including a two-part webinar series, media and educational materials. We have been successful in securing over

\$900,000 from the NSW Government to assist bushfire recovery in fire-affected coast and waterway areas and these funds will be directed to weed control, revegetation, nesting boxes and further surveys. This grant will assist provide an economic stimulus for local businesses.

The community expressed significant concern for native wildlife and the natural environment following the 2019 bushfires. It is positive that we have been able to work in combination with agencies, organisations and the community to assist environmental recovery efforts in and near bushfire-affected areas.



CATTAI CLOSED

Cattai Wetlands was closed to the public in December 2019.

MidCoast Council made the decision to close the popular local attraction after the area was significantly damaged by the bushfire.

The dry conditions on the site meant the fire moved through quickly and destroyed a large area of the wetland and some of the public infrastructure has also been impacted.

Cattai is usually a beautiful coastal wetland providing a sanctuary for over 180 different species of birds, kangaroos, wallabies and goannas.

It will take quite some time for the site to regenerate. Council is committed to working to see Cattai Wetlands thrive again, but for now the closure is best to ensure the safety of everyone.



CONTROLLING INVASIVE WEEDS TO PROTECT NATIVE BUSHLAND

Tropical Soda Apple was a high priority for Council’s Biosecurity program this year. Tropical Soda Apple typically invades open to semi-shaded areas, including pastures and riparian zones, but also forests, roadsides, recreational areas, and horticultural and cropping areas.

It’s an invasive weed with sharp prickles that impacts on both cattle and native animals. Dense thickets make it difficult for animals to access shade and water. It is also concerning that the plant is a host for many diseases and pests of cultivated crops, as well as being poisonous to humans.

Private property and public land inspections were carried out across the MidCoast region to identify outbreaks. Conditions were arduous with Council staff and contractors undertaking inspections in many remote locations including Wingham, Mount George, Number One and Cells River.

Approximately 80 inspections were conducted, identifying infestations of Tropical Soda Apple at 34 sites. Council has formed partnerships with Hunter Local Land Services and NSW Department of Primary Industry, and is working with all landholders and the community to help them accurately identify plants and manage infestations with the goal of eradication. Tropical Soda Apple is recognised as being in limited distribution in the MidCoast region making eradication in this region an important target.



Juvenile Tropical soda apple plant showing the robust cream-coloured prickles



BOAT ACCESS IMPROVED TO MANNING RIVER

Dredging helped improve boating access to the Manning River. Up to 16,000 cubic metres of marine sediment was dredged over a period of 10 weeks and used to replenish the beach at Manning Point.

The project improved the depth of the Harrington back channel, the entrance to the Harrington Waters marina and at the upstream river entrance.

Sand from the dredging operation was deposited into the surf zone at Manning Point beach, where it will continue be reworked by the wave action, widening the beach at the 4WD access point.

This project was the result of consultation and collaboration between a range of groups and will result in a number of positive impacts for the MidCoast community and beyond.

The project was funded by a NSW Government Rescuing Our Waterways grant and Council's Environmental special rate.

WASTE MANAGEMENT



PUBLIC LITTER BINS
734 GENERAL WASTE LITTER BINS
161 RECYCLING LITTER BINS



WASTE COLLECTED - WHEELIE BIN SERVICES



KERBSIDE WASTE
20,649.48 TONNES
KERBSIDE RECYCLING
8,481.79 TONNES
KERBSIDE ORGANICS
9,398.39 TONNES

TOTAL WASTE GENERATED

119,725.70 TONNES, INCLUDING RECYCLABLES

WASTE PRESENTED AT CRCS

96.96 TONNES

BULKY WASTE COLLECTION

GENERAL WASTE
578.20 TONNES
SCRAP METAL
368.60 TONNES

WASTE MANAGEMENT

MidCoast Council key actions have focused on:

- Waste avoidance
- Improving recycling behaviours
- Increasing uptake of Community Recycling Centre (CRC) services for problem waste
- Food waste composting
- Soft plastics avoidance
- School engagement activities
- Supporting MidCoast Council Library workshops to address the above
- Supporting MidWaste activities.

Re-imagine waste

Re-imagine waste (RIW) is MidCoast Council's themed marketing and social media campaign targeting recycling and waste avoidance behaviours aimed at increasing resource recovery and reducing contamination. Advertising promoted Recycle Right, Reuse of Coffee Cups and MidCoast Council Water Refill station locations.

The Mobile Recycling Trailer

The Mobile Recycling Trailer (MRT) operation was ceased in 2019 due to the bushfires and again in 2020 with COVID-19. Up until that time the MRT had visited 4 locations. Additionally, the MRT visited two bushfire affected townships to assist with clean-up efforts. In total 3.6 tonne of household problem waste was collected on these 6 visits. Our marketing campaigns inform residents that EPA approved household problem waste can be dropped, free of charge, to all six of MidCoast Councils Waste Management Centres. This includes 3 CRCs at Gloucester, Taree and Tuncurry.



WASTE MANAGEMENT

Food Waste

MidCoast Council's Food waste avoidance and food waste composting has been supported by:

- Scraps to soil – online 798 residents have now participated in this online subsidised compost bin offer since the program started in March 2018
- Community garden and Compost Hub activities MidCoast Council continues to support six community compost hubs across the region. Whilst COVID restrictions have halted community garden activities, the compost hubs, in non COVID times continue to provide opportunities for around 50 participants to divert food waste from landfill. Collectively this approximates to about seven tonnes per annum
- Scraps to Soil workshops (S2S) Food Smart (FS) and Your Business is Food (YBIF) activities organised by Midwaste

School Activities

School engagement activities have also been significantly affected by bushfires and COVID in this reporting period.

This reporting period saw the introduction of the Midwaste Green Leaders (GLs), a school project based program:

- GLs is a student directed waste reduction project. In this period GLs was introduced in 15 schools across the region
- GLs hosted an Early Childhood Educators Professional Development Workshop in Taree, February 2020
- Launched the MidCoast Sustainable Schools Network. The aim is to collaboratively support educators, their professional development, council partnerships, promote waste avoidance and find solutions for a sustainable future.



WASTE MANAGEMENT

Green Waste

Following the bushfires MidCoast Council waived green waste disposal fees for the community.

Council made it free to dispose of green waste at waste management centres to support those members of the community who wanted to clean up their yards and properties for the fire season.

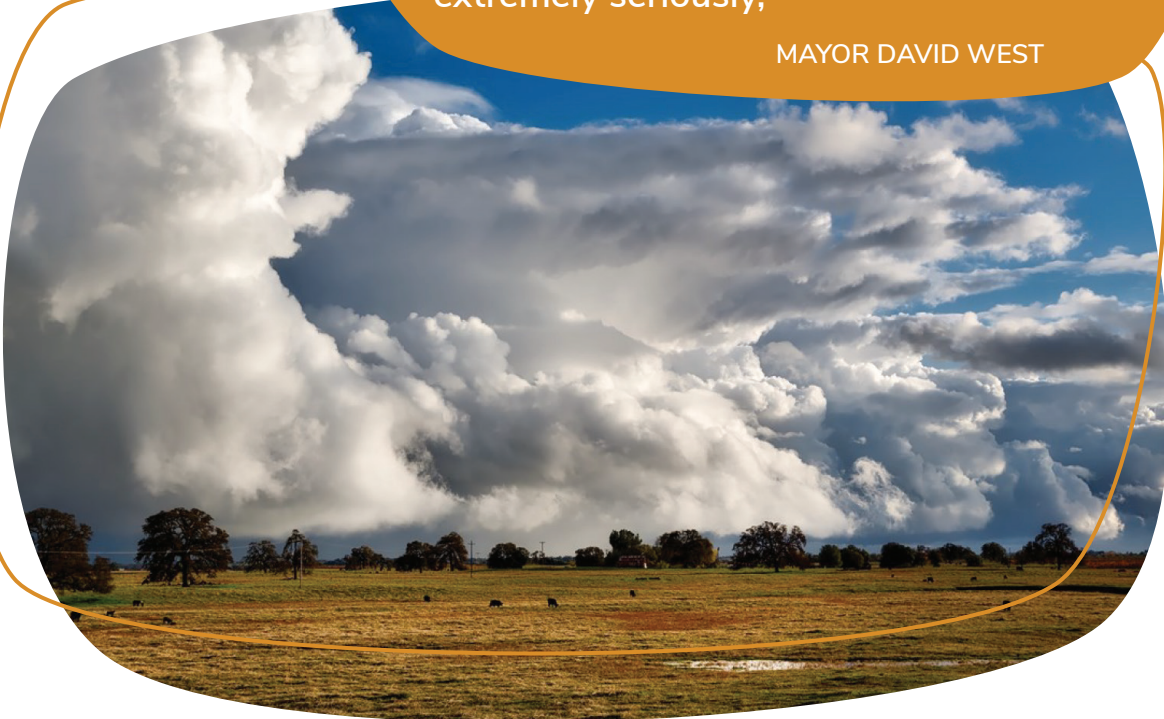
Green waste was able to be dropped at MidCoast Council waste management centres for free from Saturday 30 November up until 24 December 2019.

Sorted metal was also able to be disposed of for free. This allowed fire impacted residents to take all their fencing wire, shed metal, car bodies, white goods (eg fridges and washing machines) and other metal to any MidCoast Council waste management centre for free.



“Our commitment to developing a Climate Change Policy, and our declaration of a climate emergency formalises our response to climate change and sends a clear message to our community that we take this issue extremely seriously,”

MAYOR DAVID WEST



MIDCOAST COUNCIL DECLARES CLIMATE EMERGENCY

MidCoast Council declared a climate emergency in October 2019 and called on other levels of government to take clear steps to avert a climate crisis.

Council has recognised the imperative need to plan for the unavoidable impacts of climate change, especially the risk of inundation of low-lying areas, accelerated coastal erosion, the reduction in average annual rainfall, stream flow and water supply. As a result, Council is developing a risk-based Climate Change Policy and Action Plan.

The policy and action plan will have a dual approach – to mitigate by managing and reducing greenhouse gas emissions from Council’s operations and activities; and to adapt Council practices and activities to reduce the impact on public and private infrastructure, water supply, natural systems and communities.

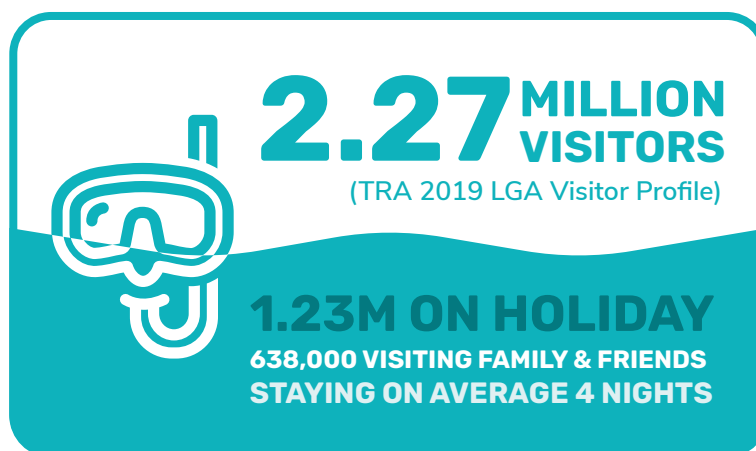
There are many actions Council has already undertaken to mitigate climate change, including the monitoring of water and energy consumption and carbon emissions, energy audits and management plans for major facilities, solar panels on public buildings, street lighting retrofits, carbon sequestration (revegetation projects) and the development of numerous strategies that address climate change.

➤ OUR THRIVING & GROWING ECONOMY

We are a place where people want to live, work and play; a place where business is resilient and adaptable to change by using knowledge and expertise that supports innovation. We work with business and community representatives to promote the region, maximising the value of current and emerging opportunities.



Lakeside Festival 2019



EVENTS

Event Sponsorship

During the 2019-2020 financial year, two rounds of event sponsorship were offered to the community. In total 59 applications for sponsorship were received. 44 of the applications were successful with a total value of \$177,308 sponsorship being awarded. Council also provided \$6,500 support to local Christmas carol events.

Major community events supported and hosted by Council

Taree Carols and Bushfire Recovery Event

The organiser of the Taree Carols was approached by the NSW State of Origin to make their event in to a major fundraiser for Bushfire recovery after the devastating bushfires in 2019.

Event Date – 19 December 2019

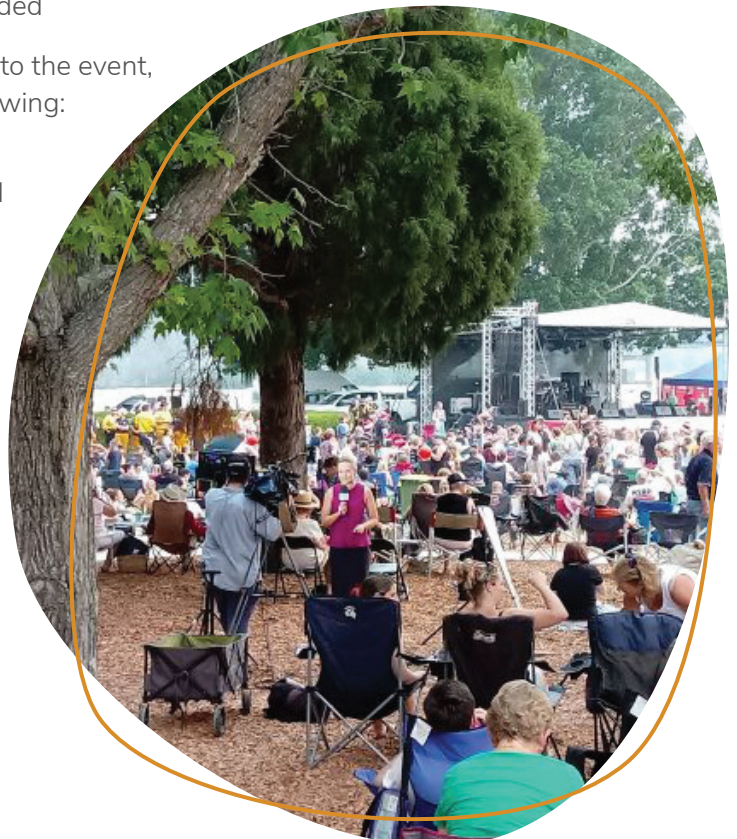
Location – Fotheringham Park Taree

Highlights

- The whole event included members of the NSW State of Origin team holding a training session in the afternoon with school aged children and then bringing a few big name artists to perform at the carols being held at Fotheringham Park that same night – artists included Shannon Noll and Travis Collins.
- The streets around the park (Victoria between Commerce and Pulteney, and a section of River in front of the park and Council building) were closed from approx. 2pm
- The NSW State of Origin team cooked a fundraising BBQ's (set up on Victoria Street)
- Between 3000-5000 people attended

As well as providing financial support to the event, Council played a major role in the following:

- Fotheringham Park was under reconstruction and Council ensured the area was ready for the event
- Ensuring that the approval was assessed and fast tracked for the event to go ahead safely
- Cooperation and constant communication with teams and agencies including roads, police, parks, emergency services and the event organiser
- The provision of event support staff, safety equipment and signage



EVENTS

NYE Fireworks by the Foreshore Taree & Tuncurry

While there was initially some community concern about proceeding with the fireworks due to the bushfires and continuing drought, both events were very successful with high attendance numbers (just slightly less than previous years) and the entertainment being well received. It was marketed as an opportunity for the community to come together and celebrate after the difficulties of the previous months. The firework firing site at Tuncurry was moved south of the bridge for the first time due to ongoing safety concerns for the pyro technicians. This move was well received.



Event Stakeholder / Focus Group Established

An Event Stakeholder (Focus Group) was established in order to streamline communication between external stakeholders and Council. The meetings provide:

- An open forum for all stakeholders to discuss any concerns or issues they foresee in regard to proposed events
- A forum to notify stakeholders of all upcoming events (those proposed to be held within 3 months of the meeting)
- An understanding of what requirements each stakeholder has in regard to an event
- An opportunity for information sharing
- Event Organisers with a forum to discuss their event with all stakeholders at one time (as invited)
- An opportunity to discuss any “pop-up” events that have been held or are currently in planning stages. These are events that have not notified the relevant authorities or sought approval to hold an event

The membership of the Focus Group comprises both internal stakeholders (relevant Council staff) and external stakeholders (affected Government agencies), helping to build productive and mutually-beneficial relationships between Council, Police, Ambulance and NSW Health.

These meetings are well attended with a lot of information shared and many perceived or anticipated issues are identified and resolved.

EVENTS

Event Organiser Capacity Building Workshops/Event Q&A Sessions

During late 2019, workshops and information sessions were introduced for the benefit of our Event Organisers. To date five sessions have been organised, however the last two had to be cancelled due to COVID-related restrictions. An overview of the workshops conducted is provided below

- Identifying and Managing Risk – held at Forster
- Information sessions
 - o Forster Information Session - evening of 20 November 2019)
 - o Gloucester Information Session - evening of 27 November 2019
 - o Taree Information Session (Wednesday evening, 6 May 2020) – Cancelled/ postponed due to COVID
 - o Forster Information Session (Tuesday evening, 5 May 2020) - Cancelled/ postponed due to COVID



Experts/specialists (current event organisers) were invited to talk about the aspects of their event that they do particularly well, including promoting/marketing event, managing volunteers, sustainability/growing their event, managing risk, managing traffic, providing adequate first aid/medical treatment. Other topics to be covered include: budgeting, event growth & planning, event sustainability, waste management and creating Business Partnerships.

Business Roundtable

Born out of response to the bushfires and general downturn in business confidence across the MidCoast, the MidCoast Regional Recovery Business Roundtable brought together representatives from MidCoast Council (staff and Councillors), local business chambers, NSW Business Chamber, Destination North Coast and NSW Department of Regional NSW.

The group met on a regular basis to discuss general business sentiments, share knowledge and information, identify opportunities for collaborative activities, and support each other to support their members, businesses and the community. The roundtable supported the creation of a comprehensive directory of businesses continuing to operate during the COVID crisis, creation of television advertising promoting shop local initiatives, the introduction of the #shopmidcoast gift card program.

EVENTS

Community Markets

During 2019, Council introduced a new Markets Policy to ensure a contemporary and consistent process existed for assessing market applications and for allocating and managing licences for markets held on Council land or land under the care and control of Council. There are 12 markets across the LGA that this policy related to. Council worked closely with each of these markets to ensure that each market met the policy criteria and were successful in being awarded licences for continued operation. To date, Council is continuing to work with the final two markets to achieve licence conditions.

The impact of COVID was greatly felt by our market operators. Farmer's markets were granted exemptions from the NSW Government due to being an essential food source. All except one of the markets in the LGA were cancelled by the market operators as a safety precaution.



ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

COVID Support

The Economic Development team were active in supporting businesses during the COVID crisis via the introduction and advertising of a comprehensive support directory located on Council website which assisted local businesses to navigate the restrictions and support available. A Business Liaison Support service was created offering phone and email access for businesses needing assistance with different aspects, including understanding how the restrictions affected individual businesses and where to access assistance in relation to finances, leasing agreements and legal services. This support service also offered a friendly ear for businesses who were under pressure.

As new information came to hand regarding resources, webinar referrals etc, networks and distribution lists were used to direct information to affected businesses.

Economic Development Working Group

The Economic Development Working Group was first established early in 2019 and continued to operate throughout 2019-20 financial year. The group consists of representatives from a number of industries across the MidCoast LGA and came together to provide skills, specialist knowledge and expertise and networks to add value to Council projects. The working group was given the opportunity to identify focus areas and 'being a business friendly council' was the centre focus. They also provided input into such projects as the Employment Zones Review undertaken by the Strategic Planning Department. Unfortunately, the working group was interrupted by bushfires in late 2019 and then the COVID pandemic. The Terms of Reference of the Economic Development Working Group is now under review.

Asia Pacific Incentives and Meetings Event (AIME)

Council attended the Asia Pacific Incentives and Meetings Event (AIME) conference for this first time in February 2019 in partnership with local conference providers such as Club Taree and Mobys Retreat. Working closely with Destination North Coast in the Business Events and Conferencing space, Council's attendance at AIME was to both promote our region as an ideal boutique conference location and to get feedback on the quality of our product offering. During the event Council and Club staff participated in 32 prearranged sales pitch meetings aimed at attraction new business events and conferences to our region. Council's focus on Business events and conferencing is a result of the sectors potential to bring significant economic and employment benefits to our region (especially midweek). In regional NSW, the sector is estimated to generate \$290 million in delegate expenditure, additional visitor expenditure of \$11.6 million from pre and post conference touring and the employment of more than 2,300 people.



TOURISM

EVERY MINUTE

OF EVERY DAY, TOURISM DELIVERS

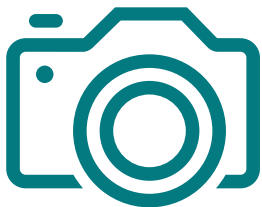
\$1197

OF VISITOR SPEND
INTO THE BARRINGTON COAST



THAT'S OVER \$1.72 MILLION PER DAY

(Tourism Research Australia, LGA Visitor Profile 2019)



TOTAL VISITATION
TO BARRINGTON

2.276

(HIGHEST ON THE NORTH COAST)

SPEND TOTAL

**\$629
MILLION**

BOTH SHOWING AN 8% YEAR-ON-YEAR INCREASE



FACEBOOK

**69K
FOLLOWERS**



INSTAGRAM

**29.5K
FOLLOWERS**

@barringtoncoast

REACHED 3.5 MILLION PEOPLE



TOURISM

Supporting tourism businesses during bushfire and COVID

The Barrington Coast team were helping to keep the business community informed through developing and distributing one Bushfire special edition newsletter and six special COVID 19 edition newsletters during March and April. Careful planning went into the newsletters to ensure content was relevant including resources to help business, establishing Be Kind to Business list, any funding opportunities available, and check-in to ask how they are doing.

Supporting businesses

General support was also provided for the business community through one on one advice, provision of digital workshops, and resources on website.

- Facebook for Beginners workshops held in Forster, Gloucester & Taree
- Weekly pop-in marketing tutorials held at Visitor Centres
- Marketing assistance
- 10 x one on one marketing sessions with tourism operators
- 5 x event organiser one on one marketing sessions
- Ongoing assistance via email and phone
- Resources available online to the Barrington Coast Business Hub and distributed through industry newsletters



Barrington Coast team meet Tim Faulkner and Aussie Ark

TOURISM INFORMATION

Business Directory

In response to the imposed guidelines on businesses due to COVID, the Destination Management team developed a mini buy local campaign to promote Barrington Coast tourism partners and other businesses that had adopted their model to remain open and viable. This campaign included:

- Be kind to business directory listing all businesses that have remained open and their offering. This was hosted on the Barrington Coast Business Hub website*
- Social media promotion of the listing
 - o Facebook posts driving people to the directory listing and encouraging other businesses to get in contact
 - o Instagram Story slides showcasing individual businesses and their offer.
- Promotion via industry newsletter Talkin' Tourism

* This directory was blended into the #shopmidcoast campaign and expanded to include a wide range of businesses, including tourism.

Everyone can visit www.shopmidcoast.com.au to see who's open for business across the MidCoast.



Barrington Coast branding

MidCoast Council's destination brand 'Barrington Coast' is becoming more visible across the region with the roll out of six roadside billboards attracting plenty of attention.

The billboards appear along a 130km stretch of the Pacific Highway from the Tea Gardens turnoff in the south to Moorland in the north and replace previous billboards on the highway

Photography on the billboards was obtained from both professional and amateur photographers and showcases the diversity of experiences the region offers, from jumping into coastal turquoise waters to playing in the snow at Barrington Tops.



Barrington Coast billboards

TOURISM

Other activities undertaken during 2019-20

- 13 x Barrington Coast branded local guide sign and maps installed across the region
- The Barrington Coast Scenic Drive brochure reprinted (10,000) and distributed across the region
- Social media influencer campaign – Female Adventure Traveller
- Media stories in Sydney Weekender, Better Homes and Gardens, Out and About with Kids Advertising over social media directed to Barrington Coast Target markets
- Pop-up visitor information centre program
- Tourism Australia social media featuring Barrington Coast
- Destination NSW social media featuring Barrington Coast
- Virtual Tour of the Barrington Coast on @VisitNSW Instagram Stories.
- Barrington Coast Social Media
 - o Facebook
 - 64,745 Page Likes
 - 66% of new followers are from Sydney and Newcastle
 - o Instagram
 - 25,000 followers
 - 6,400 new followers
 - @barringtoncoast reached 3.5million people (up 75% on 18/19)



GRANTS

Each year Council is proactively applying for funding and support to enhance and improve the infrastructure we have across the region.

Some of the successful grants we have received include:

\$300,000 – Hawks Nest Hall

\$913,000 – NSW Coastal & Estuary Grants Program

\$15,000 – Flying Fox Grant

\$100,000 – Environmental Trust Grant to undertake cliff top work at Burgess Beach Cape Hawke to Seal Rocks

\$500,000 – Wingham Library

\$810,000 – Black Spot Funding

\$730,000 – Boronia Park Improvements

\$41,250 – Black Sport Funding – Vehicle activated signage Bucketts Way Burrell Creek

\$195,000 – Mid Coast Assist

\$170,000 – Landfill Consolidation & Environmental Improvement Grant

Heritage Grants

Heritage grants received by Council include:

\$7,000 – Heritage NSW, Local Heritage Advisor Service

\$6,250 – Heritage NSW, Local Heritage Fund (Small Heritage Grants)

\$7,590 – Veterans Affairs, Nabiac Park War Memorial (Stage 4)

\$8,700 – Veterans Affairs, Taree War Memorial Clock

\$10,000 – Veterans Affairs, Wingham Vampire Jet

\$30,000 – Heritage NSW, MidCoast Heritage Planning Provisions (Project commencement delayed till 2020-2021)



GRANTS

Local Heritage Fund – grants provided by Council

MidCoast Council jointly supports improvements / restoration to heritage listed properties with Heritage NSW through the Local Heritage Fund.

In 2019-2020 \$28,250 was allocated across seventeen projects throughout the region with a total project value of \$99,809.

The Local Heritage Fund is great news for owners of heritage places across the region as MidCoast Council provides up to \$2,000 to improve the heritage value of their property.

Examples of the work being undertaken to these heritage buildings includes repairing front fences, replacing guttering and fascia board, external painting, replacement of roofing and repairs to windows and verandahs.

“These grants are a boost to help make a start on renovation projects, and they’re a great way to help preserve our local history,” explained Lillian Cullen, MidCoast Council’s Heritage Advisor.

“THE LOCAL HERITAGE FUND IS ABOUT BREATHING NEW LIFE INTO BUILDINGS AND PLACES FROM OUR PAST,”
LILLIAN CULLEN



GRANTS

Stronger Country Communities Fund

The Stronger Country Communities Fund (SCCF) was developed by the NSW Government to help deliver local projects to regional communities.

The objectives of the fund are:

- to boost the liveability of communities in regional areas by providing new or upgraded social and sporting infrastructure or community programs that have strong local support
- to provide programs and infrastructure that enhance opportunities for young people to be work ready and thrive in regional NSW

Across the MidCoast the following projects were completed during 2019-20.

PROJECT NAME & DESCRIPTION	FUNDING STREAMS		COMPLETED
Forster Ocean Baths Amenities Construction of a new amenities block featuring unisex toilets (2), accessible toilets/showers (2), Ambulant toilet (1), change rooms (2) and a storeroom for the Forster Mudcrabs. The building features “timber look” cladding to compliment the newly constructed adjoining BBQ Shelter. Outdoor showers (2) were also provided, along with landscaping and a new retaining wall.	SCCF \$200,000	MidCoast Council \$435,000	December 2019
Little Street Amenities Upgrade to the existing amenities block including; New Roof, wall cladding, internal fit out to include accessible toilets in male and female. New Bus Shelter seating and security gates.	SCCF \$100,000	MidCoast Council \$50,000	April 2020
Wingham Tennis Club Lighting Installation of new LED lighting.	SCCF \$94,448		December 2019
North Tuncurry Sporting Field Fencing Diplomat security fencing & Gates to the front of the fields, Cyclone fencing & gates to the remaining perimeter of the sporting fields.	SCCF \$114,235		August 2019
Old Bar Storage Sheds & Netball Courts Construction of a 7 bay storage shed at Old Bar Reserve. 2 new concrete netball courts.	SCCF \$445,162		February 2020



GRANTS

PROJECT NAME & DESCRIPTION	FUNDING STREAMS		COMPLETED
Cundletown Sporting Fields Lighting Replacing lights with galvanised poles and LED lighting with wireless Halytec Controller	SCCF \$133,810		June 2020
Old Bar Mens Shed Provide a new Colorbond mens shed, including storage area	SCCF \$98,370	Community \$20,000	June 2020
Aub-Ferris Clubhouse New clubhouse and storage shed with accessible amenities, home & away changerooms, referees room, meeting room, canteen & storerooms	SCCF \$393,000	MidCoast Council \$60,000	June 2020
Marlee Hall Upgrade Replace the weathered original iron roofing and gutters, replace asbestos containing wall cladding to improve public health and safety and meet heritage requirements	SCCF \$62,901		April 2020
Boronia Netball Clubhouse upgrade Stage 1 of works at Boronia Park was an extension and upgrade to the Netball Clubhouse, including storage room, amenities extensions and upgrades to include accessible toilets, covered food court	SCCF \$730,880	Community Groups \$50,000	March 2020
Stroud Showground Multi-purpose building The final stage of works at Stroud Showground as a result of the 2015 flood, a new multi-purpose building	Disaster Relief Fund \$1,153,144 +Durallie Mining \$550,000 +\$100,000 Federal CDG (Community Devpt Grant)	Community Groups \$45,000	June 2020
Cooperook River Toilets Community toilet block and pump station	SCCF \$138,050		June 2020
Harrington Dog Park & Foreshore Harrington foreshore upgrade – BBQ shelters & new BBQ. Harrington Dog Park – fully secure dog park	SCCF \$138,000		May 2020
Blackhead Paths / Outdoor Gym Equipment Asphalt Footpath and Outdoor Fitness Equipment	SCCF \$157,550		August 2019

NORTHERN GATEWAY

The Northern Gateway Project is a priority project for the MidCoast, identified in both the Hunter Regional Plan 2036 and the MidCoast Regional Economic Development Strategy.

The 74-hectare Northern Gateway project is located north of the existing developed areas of Cundletown. It is located between the Taree Regional Airport and the northern Taree interchange with the Pacific Highway. The Northern Gateway is intended for transport employment generating industries given its proximity to the Pacific Highway. Over time, this hub could be connected to other transport forms including air and rail. Expected uses include freight transport facilities, truck depots, transport depots, warehouses and distribution centres.

The precinct is strategically significant to Taree and the surrounding region. The direct effect of the project is to increase the amount of freight and freight related businesses located in Taree. It also has the potential to significantly reduce freight costs to and from the MidCoast region.

The Northern Gateway is being developed in two stages. Stage 1 of the project was rezoned in 2016. The rezoning for Stage 2 is currently being considered by Council. The map shows the extent of the two stages and the proposed zones for Stage 2. Once the rezoning process is complete, development applications will need to be lodged detailing the type and extent of development.

During 2019-2020, we have been working with Transport NSW and the Department of Planning, Industry and Environment to address transport and environmental issues. It is anticipated that community consultation on the rezoning of Stage 2 will commence in 2020-2021.

In March 2019, Member for Myall Lakes, Stephen Bromhead announced \$15 million for infrastructure works to assist with the development of the Northern Gateway project. We are working with Transport for NSW to ensure the transport infrastructure is improved, including a new roundabout and improvements to the Pacific Highway interchange.



FIGTREES ON THE MANNING – PUBLIC INFRASTRUCTURE UPDATE

In March 2019 the Hon Dr David Gillespie MP, Federal Member for Lyne, announced an \$8.5M grant to the Bushland Health Group Limited to provide public infrastructure associated with the FIGTREES on the Manning development precinct, including:

- Extending Pitt Street to link up with Bligh Street, including a bridge/culvert over the unnamed creek in this location
- Upgrading of the intersection of Nelson/Lyndhurst Streets with Oxley Street (former highway), including installation of traffic lights
- Modification of the intersection of Pioneer Street and Chatham Street (former highway) to extend turning lanes
- Upgrading of the intersection of Bligh Street and Manning River Drive (former highway), including installation of traffic lights.
- Providing a pedestrian/cycle bridge over Browns Creek, linking the Taree CBD through the Bicentennial Gardens through to the Taree Recreation Grounds/Manning Aquatic and Leisure Centre/Manning Entertainment Centre (see concept drawing below).

The grant was formally accepted by the Bushland Health Group in late 2019 and a Project Manager appointed in early 2020 to deliver the project.

This project is an example of how a not-for-profit organisation can partner with the Commonwealth government and Council to deliver public infrastructure to meet the needs of our community.

A design and construct tender was issued for the pedestrian/cycle bridge over Browns Creek, with the design approved by Council during the reporting period.

Infrastructure designers were also appointed for the other components of the project and concept designs for all components were completed and approved by Council.

Construction works will commence in late 2020 and take up to 2 years to complete.



> STRONG LEADERSHIP AND SHARED VISION

OUR MISSION:

We deliver benefits for our community in a way that adds value and builds trust



12 COMMUNITY CONVERSATIONS

18 PROJECT CONSULTATIONS



51 NEW CITIZENS

1.62 MILLION WEB PAGE VIEWS



9,707 FACEBOOK FOLLOWERS
▲ UP 54%



OVER 6669 HAVE YOUR SAY VISITS

366

MEDIA RELEASES SENT



COUNCIL MEETINGS

Councillor attendance at meetings for the period 1 July 2019 – 30 June 2020

	Ordinary Meeting	Extra Ordinary Meeting	Strategic Committee Meetings
Total Number of Meetings	15	1	2
Cr Bell	15	1	2
Cr Christensen	13	1	0
Cr Epov	13	0	1
Cr Fowler	14	1	2
Cr Hutchinson	13	1	2
Cr Keegan	14	0	0
Cr McWilliams	9	0	1
Cr Pontin	12	1	2
Cr Roberts	15	1	2
Cr Smith	15	1	2
Cr West	13	1	2



MAYOR AND DEPUTY MAYOR ELECTED

Councillor David West was returned as the Mayor of MidCoast Council at the 25 September 2019 Ordinary Council meeting.

Cr West was elected by a majority of his peers at the meeting, and will lead the Council until the local government elections in September 2020.

Cr West was first elected to the role of MidCoast Mayor in September 2017.

Cr Claire Pontin was elected as the Deputy Mayor for the first time, taking on the role from Cr Katheryn Smith who was the Deputy Mayor since September 2017. Cr Smith did not stand for re-election.



COMMUNITY CONVERSATIONS

MidCoast Council was out and about across the region reporting to communities on how priorities are being delivered.

Council staff visited local communities from Harrington in the north, down to Tea Gardens in the south, to provide information and progress updates on town-specific priorities that were discussed at the Community Conversations earlier in the year.

It was a great opportunity for community members to ask the leadership team any questions they might have about what Council is up to in their area.

This round of forums are an opportunity for us to drill down with each community, plan for next year and identify things we've already been working to achieve for them."

The Council team visit 12 communities from 17 October to 28 November, including Old Bar, Nabic, Stroud, Hallidays Point, Taree, Forster, Gloucester, Harrington, Bulahdelah, Pacific Palms, Wingham and Tea Gardens.



COMMUNITY SURVEY

Communication, engagement and reflecting community sentiment in decision making are key drivers for the community and areas MidCoast Council continue to focus on to deliver on community expectations.

The key community drivers were identified in Council's community satisfaction survey undertaken in February, designed to gain an independent, statistically valid picture of the community's concerns and priorities.

This information is important so Council can work to ensure plans and activities reflect the feedback received from the community.

The survey results, which are available on Council's website, indicate the community values the lifestyle the area offers, with 96 per cent indicating they have a very good quality of life in the MidCoast.

Overall 71 percent of residents say they are at least somewhat satisfied with the overall performance of Council.

The survey was conducted over a two-week period in February 2020 with over 400 people contacted by telephone. Participants were asked to provide feedback on a range of Council service areas through a series of questions lasting around 15 to 20 minutes.

The survey results have indicated the areas Council most needs to focus on are:

- Maintaining local roads and footpaths
- The provision of information to the community
- Providing opportunities for the community to participate in decision making and planning
- Making decisions that reflect community opinion
- Financial management
- Economic development, supporting local jobs and businesses



COMMUNITY SURVEY

Some of the highlights from the survey are outlined below, with more details available at www.midcoast.nsw.gov.au/communitysatisfactionsurvey

The aspects our community most values about living in the MidCoast are:

- Our lifestyle
- Our environment
- Our location

The most important functions for Council to deliver for the community are:

- Information
- Opportunities to participate in decision-making
- Long term planning for our area
- Maintenance of local bridges
- Decision making that reflects community opinion

The top four things community believes are the highest priority for Council to deliver over the coming 10 years are:

- Roads and supporting infrastructure such as parks and bridges
- Water supplies that are affordable and drought proof
- Improved community services
- Employment and business opportunities

When it comes to how MidCoast Council compares to regional benchmarks our community is higher than the median in 11 of 14 categories – with three falling below the benchmark. These are:

- Council plans well to help secure the community's long term future
- Information about Council and its decisions is clear and accessible
- The community is harmonious, cohesive and inclusive

The services Council delivers that matter the most to our community are:

- Maintaining local roads
- Supporting local jobs and business
- Emergency management
- Maintaining local bridges
- Water quality

The five things the community are the least satisfied with Council's performance in are:

- Maintaining local roads
- Council decision making reflecting community opinion
- The overall condition of the local sealed road network
- Opportunity to participate in Council decision making
- Engaging the community in planning



'MY MIDCOAST' LAUNCHES

A one-stop community directory – MyMidCoast – provides current information on community services and groups following its launch in February by MidCoast Council.

The directory provides up-to-date and easily-accessible information for both the local community and visitors to the area.

Information is available on ageing, youth and disability services, services for families and children, including playgroups, counselling, parenting, volunteering opportunities, social activities including arts and crafts groups, community gardens, health services, sporting groups and more.

Information can be viewed online, and is also accessible through the mobile app 'Access My Community' that can be installed on mobile devices.



PLANNING UPDATES

As part of our commitment to improving outcomes for the local community, we identified the need to introduce new planning controls for Manufactured Home Estates (MHEs) within the region. Having three sets of planning controls across the MidCoast, for the three former regions, has led to some inconsistency with how this type of development is considered.

The changes aim to clarify how MHEs are defined in the Greater Taree Local Environmental Plan 2010, Great Lakes Local Environmental Plan 2014 and Gloucester Local Environmental Plan 2010. In addition, changes to all three Development Control Plans will require MHE applications to consider issues such as the compatibility with surrounding neighbourhood, landscaping, design, parking, storage facilities, environmental issues and social impacts. We sought the community's feedback on these new planning controls from 24 June until 31 July 2020.

Additional updates to planning controls across the MidCoast were undertaken to increase the land supply for housing, including:

- amendments to the Greater Taree Local Environmental Plan 2010 and Development Control Plan 2010 to enable the residential development of 74ha of land at Kolodong. The land was included in a residential zone and has the potential to provide around 450 lots
- an amendment to the Greater Taree Local Environmental Plan 2010 to include 391 Diamond Beach Rd, Diamond Beach into a tourist zone. This site is located within a tourist precinct in north Diamond Beach
- an amendment to the Gloucester Local Environmental Plan 2010 to include land at 4571 The Buckets Way, Gloucester into a Low Density Residential zone and the Environmental Conservation zone. Known as Gloucester River Run, the site has the potential to provide around 80 residential lots.



EMERGENCY EXERCISE AT TAREE AIRPORT

A mandatory, planned training exercise was held at Taree Airport during August.

Training exercises are scheduled every two years and are designed to ensure emergency services can respond and are well prepared for any event at the Airport.

The August exercise included local teams from the NSW Police Services, Fire and Rescue NSW, Ambulance, Rural Fire Service, SES and MidCoast Council.

“Practical exercises are the best way for emergency teams and other stakeholders, to get first-hand experience, in live conditions during these events,” Andrew Blatch, Coordinator & Local Emergency Management Officer MidCoast Council

Emergency services met the Manning Visitor Information Centre to be briefed on the planned scenario. They then proceeded to the airport as if it was a real emergency call out, where agencies responded to the potential patients and other situations common with an aeronautical incident.

The emergency exercises are held on weekends, so that volunteer rescue personnel can also be involved in these worthwhile events.



TEACHING SENIORS TO BE TECH SAVVY

Technology moves at an alarming pace and it's easy for older generations to fall behind, but a new program offered by MidCoast Assist helps seniors get up to speed with current devices, with the help of some younger 'tech buddies'.

Thanks to a Federal Government Commonwealth Home Support Program (CHSP) grant, MidCoast Council's ageing services team at MidCoast Assist implemented a 'Technology in Homes' project for older people in the MidCoast region and clients lined up to be a part of the program.

The aim of the project is to help older people stay connected and become confident in using technology and never has there been a more important time to ensure everyone is up to date.

The recent bushfire crisis highlighted the importance of technology in staying up to date. Some people who live in fire affected areas, that may have needed to evacuate, found it difficult to keep up to date as the situation progressed and emergency notifications.

Guest presenters demonstrated a range of technology and devices, as well as answered any questions from participants, before clients were able to try out the technology for themselves.



TRAINEES AND APPRENTICES

During Local Government Week, MidCoast Council made a commitment to double the number of apprentices, trainees and engineering graduate placements over the coming years.

Council also plans to increase opportunities for student work placement and pre-apprenticeship recruitment initiatives to support youth, the disadvantaged and the broader community.

MidCoast Council offered over 25 new apprenticeship and traineeship positions, commencing 2020.

“We are committed to attracting and retaining apprentices, trainees and engineering graduates into our organisation and we’re pleased to be able to offer such a great range of opportunities for jobseekers in the area.”

ADRIAN PANUCCIO,
GENERAL MANAGER MIDCOAST COUNCIL



Ben Langdon started an Engineering Fabrication apprenticeship with MidCoast Council in 2018. He is pictured with Helen Hamilton from Council's HR Team.

AUSTRALIA DAY ACROSS THE MIDCOAST

Australia Day 2020 was a wonderful celebration of culture, citizenship, community and appreciation for some very special people from across the region.

It's a new decade and with it MidCoast Council hosted a new kind of Australia Day civic ceremony, with a consolidated celebration alongside the amazing Saltwater Freshwater Festival.

This year's ceremony included region-wide award recipients with nominations coming from all across the MidCoast in six categories.

It was also important for Council to change the overall focus of the day and highlight the importance of our local Aboriginal culture.

While community organised Australia Day ceremonies were also held across the MidCoast, Council's civic ceremony together with the Saltwater Freshwater Festival, was held at Forster Sporting Complex, opposite the YMCA in Lake Street, Forster.



Australia Day Ambassador

Who better to lead the way as our Australia Day Ambassador than Superintendent Kam Baker AFSM.

Kam's leadership during the bushfire crisis as he drove the firefighting efforts across the MidCoast and beyond but in his true style he has met every obstacle, coordinated with understanding and tact and lead with compassion, care and tenacity.

"I cannot think of a more deserving, more fitting Australia Day Ambassador for the MidCoast region. Kam is a prime example of a true Aussie hero who accepted this accolade on behalf of his entire team."

MAYOR DAVID WEST



AWARDS

The award recipients this year represented everything that is great about the people of the MidCoast region.

This year's nominees came from across the whole MidCoast Local Government area after it was decided to consolidate the three main ceremonies previously held at Gloucester, Taree and Forster into one single, civic ceremony.

Members of Council's awards panel were grateful to everyone who took the time to nominate an individual or group they felt was deserving of regional honours, admitting it had been a difficult task to narrow down the field.

There were six awards categories this year – Cultural Award, Volunteer of the Year Award, Community Activity of the Year Award, Sportstar of the Year Award, Young Citizen of the Year and Citizen of the Year.

The full list of nominees and the winner in each category is available <https://www.midcoast.nsw.gov.au/News-Media/Council-congratulates-Aus-Day-awardees>



ENGAGEMENT

Engagement in 2019 saw us delivering through usual channels of communication and face to face methods.

In early 2020 we were faced with the worldwide health crisis which initially halted community engagement. After reassessing how we could deliver safely, community engagement moved to predominately online methods. We have continued to deliver for our community and adapted to meet health requirements and project deliverables for our community, continuing to build and develop how we connect. This process has had its challenges, however, we have moved from strength to strength identifying new opportunities and adapting existing methods to how we engage.

Consultations were held for:

- Project community meetings
- Information sessions
- Workshops
- Pop ups/ drop ins
- Online

Over the region including - Gloucester, Taree, Forster, Blackhead, Wingham, Harrington, Hawks Nest, Smiths Lake, North Arm Cove, Carrington, Pindimar, Bundabah, Allworth, Winda Woppa

Community meetings

Due to COVID the second round of Community Conversations were put on hold - 12 community conversation meetings were held during October-November 2019.



FEDERAL FUNDING FOR THE REGION

Council has been working closely with the Federal Member for Lyne Dr David Gillespie MP. Together we are delivering in the key areas of Liveability, Culture and Economy, Infrastructure, Development and Environment outlined in the Federal Government's shared Vision 2030 Plan.

Working in partnership, the Australian Government is supporting our region and communities on the road to recovery through:

- **Bucketts Way Upgrade Stage 2** - \$25 million in Federal funding has been allocated to the upgrade. Council is currently finalising their scope of works to present to Government
- **Local Roads and Community Infrastructure Fund** – \$8.1 Million has been allocated for road and footpath projects, pool and play area upgrades, Main Street Beautification and many more exciting projects
- **Financial Assistance Grants Program** – The Australian Government supports MidCoast Council with close to \$18 million to deliver infrastructure, health, recreation, cultural, environmental and employment projects
- **Bushfire Disaster Recovery** - \$1.4 million in Federal funding to be allocated to upgrade the facilities in 52 halls across the MidCoast region
- **Bushfire Community Resilience and Economic Recovery Fund** - \$500,000 in Federal and State Government funds have been allocated for projects across MidCoast to assist Community wellbeing, connectedness, social recovery, and future disaster resilience
- **Forster Civic Precinct** - \$6 million in Federal funding was allocated to this project to house a new library, tourism information and customer service centre
- **Nabiac Aquifer Water Supply project** – \$1.47 million towards the completion of stage 2 of the Nabiac Borefield project, enhancing and protecting our water supply
- **Fig Trees on the Manning Precinct** - \$8.5 million in Federal funding was made available to the Bushland Health Group to undertake council-required public infrastructure work for the precinct in 2019
- **Taree Universities Campus project** – \$1.5 million in Federal funding has been made available to a community-based non-profit organisation to facilitate the delivery of local university degree courses with partner institutions



“ 2019 -2020 has been a year that none of us will forget. After fires, floods and drought, our country was hit by COVID-19.

Tragically, lives and livelihoods have been lost, however Australians are resilient and together we will rebuild and come out stronger.”

DR DAVID GILLESPIE MP



STRONG SUPPORT FOR UNIVERSITY PRESENCE IN MIDCOAST

In August 2019 Member for Lyne Dr David Gillespie, together with MidCoast Council General Manager Adrian Panuccio and Mayor David West, announced plans are in place to create the Taree Universities Campus.

The project has since received \$1.5 million in federal funding to develop the new campus which will deliver a range of university degrees by various universities under the one roof. Dr Gillespie said the project will take university education in the Manning and Great Lakes “to the next level.”

A board of community members across the MidCoast Council area have been appointed for the Taree Universities Campus. The Board has appointed well-known local Donna Ballard as Chief Executive Officer and plans to establish a local stake holder committee to support Taree Universities Campus’ activities.



L to R:
MidCoast GM
Adrian Panuccio,
Dr David Gillespie MP
and Mayor David West

STATE FUNDING FOR THE REGION

The NSW Government have always worked in close collaboration with MidCoast Council for the betterment of our community and this year was no exception.

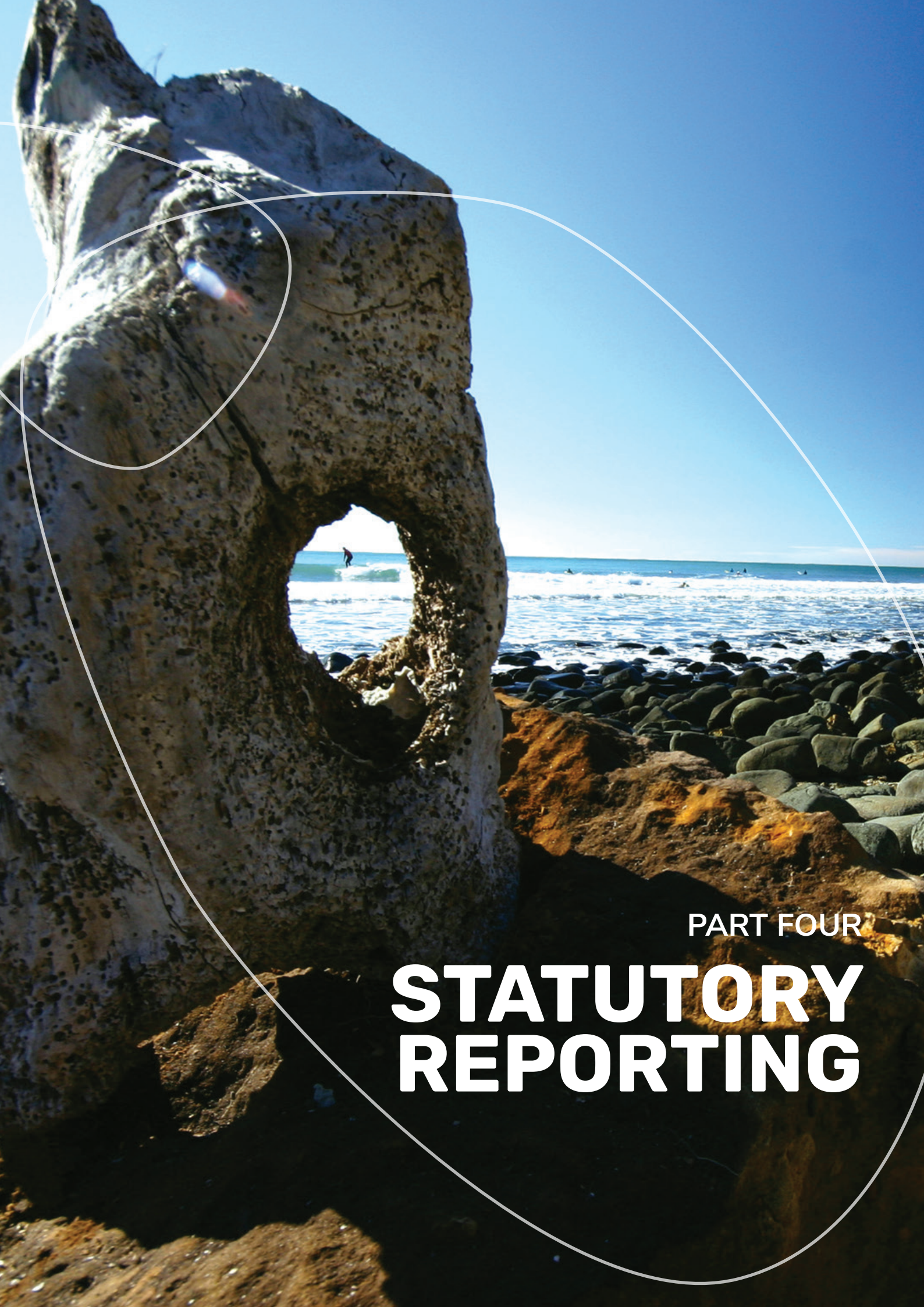
Some of the projects made possible in 2019-20 through the teamwork of the NSW Government and MidCoast Council include:

- \$15 million for Northern Gateway Transport Hub Project
- \$250,000 from the Bushfire Community Resilience and Economic Recovery Fund.
- \$1.2 million to upgrade the power at Whitbred Industrial Estate
- \$1.2 million for North Coast Inclusive Aquatic Facility
- \$50,000 Manning RiverStage
- \$253,000 to upgrade Nabiac Showgrounds Kiosk
- Up to \$8.5M towards drought response for the MidCoast and the completion of Stage 2 of Nabiac Borefield to achieve short term economic stimulus as part of the COVID-19 response whilst substantially improving water security for the region
- \$393,000 Aub-Ferris Clubhouse at Nabiac Showground for a new clubhouse and storage shed with amenities
- \$200,000 towards new amenities block, BBQ shelter, outdoor showers and landscaping at Forster Ocean Baths

“2019-20 has been a year fraught with twists and turns for our region, facing drought, devastating bushfires and a global pandemic. Through this time of hardship cooperation between all three levels of government has been key to mapping a path to recovery.”

MEMBER FOR MYALL LAKES, STEPHEN BROMHEAD MP





PART FOUR

STATUTORY REPORTING

2019-20 Statutory Reporting

The following Statutory reports are required under the Local Government Act 1993, Local Government (General) Regulation 2005, REG 2017 and other NSW Government Acts. The relevant clause is highlighted with each report.

Within 5 months after the end of (financial) year, prepare a report as to Council's achievements in implementing its delivery program and the effectiveness of the principal activities undertaken in achieving the objectives at which those principal activities are directed.

Section 428(1) Local Government Act

An overview of some of the achievements from 1 July 2019 through to 30 June 2020 is included in Part 2 of this report. A detailed report was presented to Council, 26 August 2020 Ordinary Meeting outlining the achievements against each item in the Operational Plan.

The annual report of the year in which an ordinary election of councillors is held, must contain council's achievements in implementing the community strategic plan over the previous four years.

Section 428(2) Local Government Act

Council endorsed the first Community Strategic Plan (CSP) for MidCoast in April 2018 and has subsequently adopted associated Delivery Programs and Operational Plans. Achievements will be reported in this and future annual reports as per the Act. Due to COVID-19 the next Council election is scheduled for September 2021.

The annual report must be prepared in accordance with Integrated Planning and Reporting Guidelines (IP&R).

Section 428(3) Local Government Act

The annual report has been prepared in accordance with IP&R Guidelines.

Must contain a copy of the Council's audited financial reports prepared in accordance with the *Local Government Code of Accounting Practice and Financial Reporting* (may be an attachment)

Section 428(4)(a) Local Government Act

Audited financial statements are included in Part 5 of this report.

Must contain other information as the IP&R Guidelines or the regulations may require

Section 428(4)(b) Local Government Act

All required information has been included in this annual report.

Copy of council's annual report must be posted on the council's website and be provided to the Minister for Local Government (via OLG). This can be done by notifying OLG of a URL link.

Section 428(5) Local Government Act

A copy of the MidCoast Council Annual Report is available under 'plans and reports' on Council's website www.midcoast.nsw.gov.au/AnnualReport and will be sent to the Minister for Local Government following endorsement by Council at the 18 November 2020 Ordinary Council meeting.

Include particulars of any environmental upgrade agreement entered into by the council.

Section 54P(1) Local Government Act

MidCoast Council did not enter into any environmental upgrade agreements.

Report on activities funded via a special rate variation in general income including:

- **Reporting requirements sent out in the Instrument of Approval**
- **Projects or activities funded from the variation**
- **Outcomes achieved as a result of the projects or activities**

Special Rate Variation Guidelines (SRV Guidelines) 7.1

Special Rate Variation (SRV)

\$5.333 million was levied in 2019-20 for the allocation to existing road work programs and for the payment of existing and future borrowings undertaken to fund Council's \$50 million contribution to the Road Upgrade program outlined below.

At 30 June 2020 \$5.156 million of funds remain restricted for these purposes.

During the year Council allocated \$1.782 million to renewal works on the road network being:

- Urban Rehabilitation - \$586,175
- Rural Resurfacing - \$586,175
- Rural Rehabilitation - \$500,000
- Regional Resurfacing – \$110,000

Council also repaid \$1.265 million of principal and interest on loans taken out for roadworks projects from the former Great Lakes Council and under the Road Upgrade Program.

There were no new borrowings taken out during the 2019/2020 financial year under the Road Upgrade Program.

Environmental levy

\$4.114 million levied in 2019-20 through the Environmental Levy component of Ordinary rates.

During 2019/2020 \$4.383 million of the Environmental levy funds were spent. Projects included were:

- Ecological Health Assessment Reporting
- Hallidays Point Littoral Rainforest Restoration Project
- Lowland Rainforest Restoration Project
- Water Sensitive Urban Design Projects and Priorities
- Biodiversity Management Strategy Works
- Pipers Creek Retrofit
- Racecourse Creek Impact on Old Bar Beach Study
- WSUD Proprietary Device Maintenance
- Blueys Beach Pedestrian Access Improvements
- Sandbar Beach Opening
- Riverbank Erosion Works – Wallamba River / Wallis Lake
- Locketts Crossing Works
- Boat Ramp Upgrades – Bohnock, Cundletown
- Harrington Backchannel Dredging
- Farquhar Inlet Dredging
- Tuncurry Channel Dredging
- Navigational Dredging
- Dumaresq Island Riverbank Restoration Project
- Cost Benefit Analysis - Big Swamp Project
- Old Bar – Manning Point Coastal Management Program
- Big Swamp / Cattai Wetlands Works
- Marine Estate Management Strategy

At 30 June 2020 \$5.086 million of funds remain restricted for the purposes for which the levy was approved. Many of the programs listed above are multi-year delivery projects for which the funds on hand are allocated.

The annual report of a Council in the year in which an ordinary election of Councillors is to be held must include a report (a state of the environment report) as to the state of the environment in the local government area in relation to such environmental issues as may be relevant to the objectives for the environment established by the community strategic plan (the environmental objectives).

Section 428A Local Government Act

A State of the Environment report will be prepared for the 2021-22 Annual Report as the elections will be held September 2021.

Amount of rates and charges written off during the year.

Clause 132 Local Government (General) Regulation

Postponed Rates and Charges <i>Local Government Act 1993, Section 595</i>	\$20,554.45
Authority of General Manager <i>Local Government (General) Regulation 2005 Clause 131 (6)</i>	\$26,995.01
Ratable properties now exempt from Rates <i>Local Government Act 1993 Section 555 - 558</i>	\$31,355.64
Pensioner Rate Reductions <i>Local Government Act 1993 Section 575(2)</i>	\$4,792,659.33
Concealed Leak Applications <i>Clause 132 Local Government (General) Regulation 2005</i>	\$135,446.15

Details, including purpose, of overseas visits by councillors, council staff or other persons representing council (including visits sponsored by other organisations).

Section 428(4)(b) Local Government Act, and Clause 217(1)(a1) Local Government (General) Regulation

In 2019-20 no overseas travel was undertaken by the Mayor, Councillors or staff.

Total cost during the year of the payment of expenses of, and the provision of facilities to, Councillors in relation to their civic functions.

Clause 217(1)(a1) Local Government (General) Regulation

Mayoral and Councillors' fees and provision of facilities.

Council policy identifies the expenses that will be paid and the provision of facilities to the Mayor and Councillors in relation to discharging the duties of civic office. The policy was adopted on 28 February 2018.

Our policy recognises that the Mayor and Councillors, in performing their civic functions, are entitled to be provided with certain facilities and be reimbursed for expenses noted in the policy. The Councillor Expenses and Facilities Policy can be read and downloaded from Council's website.

Council is required under Clause 217(1)(a1) of the Local Government Act 1993 to pay an annual allowance to the Mayor and Councillors. The following is a summary of the expenses incurred in performing the functions of the Mayor and Councillors and associated allowances.

Total costs \$ 428,536.94

Allowances

Mayoral allowance	\$44,250.00
Elected member allowance	\$223,079.89
Expenses (as per below)	\$161,207.05

Expenses

Dedicated office equipment	\$0.00	Interstate travel & accommodation	\$0.00
Telephone & internet expenses	\$4,840.20	Overseas travel & accommodation	\$0.00
Printing & stationery	\$750.38	Mayoral vehicle	\$13,500.00
Conferences & seminars	\$10,844.55	Insurance	\$6,612.94
Training	\$8,304.44	Sustenance	\$5,613.73
Travel	\$19,773.08	Partner's expenses	\$0.00
Out of pocket expenses	\$1,105.48	Child Care expenses	\$0.00
Security	\$3,582.61	LGNSW Membership	\$59,031.84
Subscriptions	\$13,301.00	Sundries	\$3,225.94
Accommodation	\$806.86	Civic Expenses	\$9,914.00

Six Councillors (Mayor West, Cr Epov, Cr Fowler, Cr Bell, Cr Pontin, and Cr Roberts) attended the LGNSW Conference held 14 – 16 October 2019 in Warwick Farm.

Details of each contract awarded for amounts greater than \$150,000.

Clause 217(1)(a2) Local Government (General) Regulation

Tender Arrangements General

Contracts awarded in excess of \$150,000 made subsequent to the calling of formal tenders are listed below for 2019-20.

Contractor	Details	Value (incl. GST)
Arkwood Organic Recycling	Beneficial Reuse of Bio-solids	\$495,000
Allightsykes Pty Ltd	Pump Supply Temporary Desalination Plant Nabiac	\$203,280
Barry Pfister Building	Boronia Park Clubhouse Extensions	\$313,500
Berg Building	Boronia Park Great Lakes Netball Clubhouse Extension	\$225,000
Bridgeworks [Aust] Pty Ltd	Emu Creek, Burrell Creek and Bungwahl Creek Bridges Construction	\$3,520,000
Daniel Stallworthy Builder	Construction Forster Main Beach Ocean Baths Amenities	\$197,182
Dredging Solutions Pty Ltd	Harrington Backchannel Navigational Maintenance Dredging	\$629,695
Eire Construction Pty Ltd	Civil & Mechanical Works for Temporary Nabiac Desalination Plant	\$1,782,047
Eire Constructions	Reconstruction of Queen Street Gloucester	1,160,500
GroupGSA Pty Ltd	Architectural Design of Office Relocation	\$567,391
Hunter H2O Holdings Pty Ltd	Design & Project Management of Nabiac Desalination Plant	\$514,108

Hunter Local Land Service	Karuah Catchment Management Grants Program	\$445,500
Hurley Palmer & Flatt Pty Ltd	Services Engineering Design for Office Relocation	\$225,500
Microsoft	Microsoft Office Licensing	1,080,200
Osmoflo Water Management Pty Ltd	Desalination Equipment Hire and Operation	\$2,700,000
OutKat Pty Ltd	Construction of Stroud Showground Multipurpose Building	\$1,100,000
Polymaster	Nabiac Emergency Desalination Plant	\$365,152
RJ & CL Thomas	Construction Aub Ferris Oval Clubhouse Nabiac	\$462,000
Saunders CivilBuild Pty Ltd	Deep & Browns Creek Bridges	\$3,300,000
Talis Civil Pty Ltd	Construction Wards and Relton Bridges	\$2,546,500
Telstra Corporation Limited	Telecommunications	\$1,042,740
Viadux	Supply & Delivery 375mm PVC Pressure Pipe	\$525,888
Vinindex Pty Ltd	Pipe Supply Temporary Desalination Plant Nabiac	\$539,899

Notes:

- 1) Extract from Council Contracts Register available on the MidCoast Council website
- 2) Contracts > \$150k total value (incl. GST) that were active in FY2019-20
- 3) Listed in alphabetical order
- 4) Panels are excluded – appointment to a panel does not involve or imply awarding of a contract

Summary of the amounts incurred by the council in relation to legal proceedings.

Clause 217(1)(a3) Local Government (General) Regulation

Matter	Court	Cost	Status
Price	Local Court	\$725	Completed
Whitelock	Local Court	\$3,670	Completed
Tea Gardens Farms Pty Ltd	Land and Environment Court	\$30,111	Ongoing
Boomerang Beach Residents Group – Development Application	Land and Environment Court	\$35,553	Ongoing
Lindsay Taylor	Land and Environment Court	\$1,153	Completed
CJHA Pty Ltd	Land and Environment Court	\$8,021	Ongoing
Ingenia Communities Pty Ltd	Land and Environment Court	\$25,982	Ongoing
Joint Venture Pty Ltd – Development Application	Land and Environment Court	\$51,776	Ongoing
McBride	Land and Environment Court	\$988 (\$110,000)	Ongoing
Oxford Street Holdings Pty Ltd	Land and Environment Court	\$62,936	Completed
Robibaro	Land and Environment Court	\$3,359	Ongoing
Stewart	NCAT	\$1,636	Ongoing

Barrington Heights Concerned Residents Association Incorporated – Development Application	Land and Environment Court	\$2,239	Completed
Dukic	Land and Environment Court	\$17,090	Completed
LI0054589 - PL - Professional Indemnity	Supreme	\$12,500	Matter Settled
LI0020693 - PL - Personal Injury	District Court	\$7,073	Matter Settled
LI0034654 - PL - Personal Injury	Supreme	\$3,736	Before the court
LI0045207 - PL - Personal Injury	District Court	\$12,500	Before the court

Include resolutions made concerning work carried out on private land.
Section 67(3) Local Government Act, and Clause 217(1)(a4) Local Government (General) Regulation

There were no resolutions of Council for private works.

Total amount contributed or otherwise granted to financially assist others.
Clause 217(1)(a5) Local Government (General) Regulation

Grant type	Amount
Event Support	\$183,808*
Community Grants (annual fixed donations under the community donations policy)	\$63,800
Rates Donations	\$46,620
Annual funding round donations	\$17,569
Duralie Coal Fund – community donations	\$0
Total	\$311,797

* Some events did not proceed due to fires, floods and Public Health orders. Council Event Sponsorship is not paid to events that did not proceed. Amount granted will be more than the amount paid.

Statement of all external bodies that exercised functions delegated by Council.
Clause 217(1)(a6) Local Government (General) Regulation

There are various Section 355 Committees and Hall Committees operating across the MidCoast region. These Committees are exercising functions delegated by Council in accordance with Section 377 of the Local Government Act 1993.

Statement of all corporations, partnerships, trusts, joint ventures, syndicates or other bodies in which Council held a controlling interest.

Clause 217(1)(a7) Local Government (General) Regulation

The Hunter Joint Organisation, and its group entities, are the hub for local government collaboration, strengthening our communities by being the local voice on regional strategic issues in the Hunter and delivering tailored local government solutions. For over sixty years, local government in the Hunter has found significant benefit in working together through positive cooperation and resource sharing.

There are four key entities that operate as part of the current enterprise offering:-

- **Hunter Joint Organisation** – a statutory body under the *Local Government Act 1993 (NSW)*, established in 2018 to identify, advocate for and collaborate on regional strategic priorities for the Hunter. The Hunter Joint Organisation’s statutory mandate includes identifying key regional strategic priorities, advocating for these priorities, and building collaborations around these priorities with other levels of government, industry and community.
- **Strategic Services Australia Limited** (and its wholly owned subsidiary **Hunter Councils Legal Services Limited**) – are companies limited by guarantee under the *Corporations Act 2001 (Cth)* and established to improve the quality and efficiency of local government services throughout the Hunter Region. These organisations offer tailored local government services through its five divisions; Local Government Training Institute, Local Government Legal, Regional Procurement, Screen Hunter (which, under delegation from member councils, licences film production on council owned and control land), and the Regional Policy & Programs Division (which delivers on the strategic priorities of the Hunter Joint Organisation, including the Hunter and Central Coast Regional Environment Program (HCCREMS), on behalf of both Hunter JO member councils and Central Coast Council).
- **Hunter Councils Incorporated** - an incorporated association under the *Associations Incorporation Act 2009 (NSW)* that holds property assets for the Hunter Joint Organisation group.

MidCoast Council has representation on each entity’s Board, and shares ownership and governance of the entities with the other nine councils of the Hunter Region.

Statement of all corporations, partnerships, trusts, joint ventures, syndicates or other bodies in which Council participated during the year.

Clause 217(1)(a8) Local Government (General) Regulation

Delegated committees

Committee	Membership	Representatives
Audit, Risk and Improvement Committee	Two Councillor representatives Three independent representatives	Chair: Independent Cr Keegan Cr Pontin Cr Epov (alternate)

Reference Group

Committee	Membership	Representatives
Barrington Coast Destination Management Reference Group	Two Councillors Nine tourism representatives Three specific industry representatives	Cr Hutchinson (Chair) Cr Fowler

Community Inclusion & Wellbeing Reference Group	Two Councillor representatives plus alternate Eight community representatives Four representatives from relevant government and non-government agencies	Cr Smith (Chair) Cr Keegan
Community Recovery Bushfire Reference Group	Mayor & Deputy Mayor Up to 13 community leaders One rep from Mid Coast Renewal Committee Professional Community Development representative	Mayor David West Deputy Mayor Claire Pontin
Floodplain Management Advisory Committee	Up to two Councillors Local SES Rep from OEH Up to eight community reps Manager Transport Assets Manager Strategic Planning Coastal & Flooding Engineer	Cr Epov (Chair) Cr Hutchinson Cr Smith (alternate)
Heritage Reference Group	Two Councillor representatives plus alternate Heritage Advisor 16 community representatives from Historical Societies	Cr Bell (Co-Chair) Cr Roberts (Co-Chair)
MidCoast Council Sport & Recreation Reference Group	Two Councillor representatives plus alternate Up to 14 community representatives from different areas with interest in sport	Cr Christensen Cr Fowler
MidCoast Cultural Plan 2036 Reference Group	Two Councillors Up to nine representatives from arts and culture sector One from Arts Mid North Coast One from Destination North Coast	Cr Pontin Cr Hutchinson Cr Smith (alternate)
Manning River Estuary Coastal Management Program Reference Group	2 Councillors 5 public authority representatives 1 traditional owner 1 oyster industry rep 3 rural reps 1 boating / fishing rep 1 community member 1 Landcare	Cr Smith Cr Roberts Cr Keegan
Old Bar – Manning Point Coastal Management Program Reference Group	2 Councillors 5 public authority representatives 1 traditional owner 1 Old Bar Sand Replenishment Group	Cr Smith Cr Roberts Cr Keegan

1 Manning Point Concerned
Citizens Group
1 Old Bar – Manning Point
CoC
1 boating / fishing
1 bird watchers
1 community member
1 Manning Coastcare

Pacific Blue Metal Quarry at Possum Brush	Mayor – Cr West
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Working Groups

Committee	Membership	Representatives
Economic Development Working Group	Three Councillors Nine Commerce & Industry members	Cr Pontin (Chair) Cr Epov Cr Hutchinson
Annual Donations Assessment Panel	Three Councillors	Cr Pontin Cr McWilliams Cr Bell

External Committees

Committee	Membership	Representatives
Arts Mid North Coast		Cr Pontin Cr Smith (alternate)
Bushfire Management Committee		Cr Roberts
Duralie Coal Mine Community Consultative Committee	State endorsed Committee	Cr Hutchinson Cr Smith
Gloucester Exploration Project Community Consultative Committee – Gloucester Resources Limited (GRL)	State endorsed Committee	Cr Pontin Cr Epov (alternate)
Hunter JO	Mayor & General Managers from Hunter JO Councils	Mayor General Manager
Hunter Regional Weeds Committee		Mayor – Cr West
Joint Regional Planning Panels		Cr Epov Cr Keegan Cr McWilliams (alternate)
Local Traffic Committee		Cr Christensen
Manning Liquor Consultative Committee		Cr Christensen
Mid North Coast Weight of Loads Group		Cr Smith
Mine and Energy Related Councils		Cr Smith
NSW Public Libraries Association		Cr Keegan
NSW RFS District Liaison Committee		Cr Roberts
Port Stephens Great Lakes Marine Advisory Committee	State endorsed Committee	Cr Hutchinson

Port Stephens Myall Lakes Estuary Management Committee	State endorsed Committee	Cr Pontin
Stratford Coal Mine Community Consultative Committee		Cr Hutchinson Cr Smith (alternate)
Stroud Heritage Conservation Inc		Cr McWilliams

Other

Committee	Membership	Representatives
General Manager's Performance Review Panel	Mayor Deputy Mayor One Councillor	Mayor Deputy Mayor Cr Hutchinson
Hunter – SSA/GMAC	General Manager's from Hunter JO	General Manager

External

Committee	Membership	Representatives
Destination North Coast	Council representatives from the MidCoast to Tweed Heads, including Lord Howe Island	
General Manager's Performance Review Panel	Mayor Deputy Mayor One Councillor	Mayor Deputy Mayor Cr Hutchinson
Hunter Central Coast Regional Environmental Management Strategy (HCCREMS)		
Midcoast Waste Services		
MidWaste		
NSW State Forests		
State Wide Liability Scheme		
Statewide Mutual		
StateCover Mutual Limited		

Statement of activities to implement its EEO management plan.

Clause 217(1)(a9) Local Government (General) Regulation

The EEO activities over the 2019-20 year include:

- Implementation of a Recruitment & Selection Policy (ensure Council's recruitment and selection processes are understood and applied in a fair, consistent, professional and non-discriminatory manner)
- Implementation of a Training & Development Policy (provide employees with reasonable, non-discriminatory and equitable access to professional development opportunities)
- Participation in the Elsa Dixon Aboriginal Employment Program
- Training for supervisors of Apprentices and Trainees
- Ongoing implementation of Council's Employment-Based Training Strategy
- Review of Council's new starter induction program. The program covers off employee EEO responsibilities
- Commenced development of a Flexible Working Framework.

Statement of the total remuneration comprised in the remuneration package of the General Manager.

Clause 217(1)(b) Local Government (General) Regulation

Total value of the salary component of the package	\$350,456.62
<i>Clause 217(1)(b)(i) Local Government (General) Regulation</i>	
Total amount of any bonus, performance or other payments that do not form part of the salary component	Nil
<i>Clause 217(1)(b)(ii) Local Government (General) Regulation</i>	
Total amount payable by way of the employer's contribution or salary sacrifice to any superannuation scheme to which the general manager may be a contributor	\$33,293.38
<i>Clause 217(1)(b)(iii) Local Government (General) Regulation</i>	
Total value of any non-cash benefits for which the general manager may elect under the package	Nil
<i>Clause 217(1)(b)(iv) Local Government (General) Regulation</i>	
Total amount payable by way of fringe benefits tax for any such non-cash benefits	Nil
<i>Clause 217(1)(b)(v) Local Government (General) Regulation</i>	

Statement of the total remuneration comprised in the remuneration packages of all senior staff members, expressed as the total (not of individual members).

Clause 217(1)(c) Local Government (General) Regulation

Total value of the salary components of the packages	\$796,755.70
<i>Clause 217(1)(c)(i) Local Government (General) Regulation</i>	
Total amount of any bonus, performance or other payments that do not form part of the salary components of their packages	Nil
<i>Clause 217(1)(c)(ii) Local Government (General) Regulation</i>	
Total amount payable by the Council by way of the employer's contribution or salary sacrifice to any superannuation scheme to which any of them may be a contributor	\$75,691.80
<i>Clause 217(1)(c)(iii) Local Government (General) Regulation</i>	
Total value of any non-cash benefits for which any of them may elect under the package	Nil
<i>Clause 217(1)(c)(iv) Local Government (General) Regulation</i>	
Total amount payable by way of fringe benefits tax for any such non-cash benefits	Nil
<i>Clause 217(1)(c)(v) Local Government (General) Regulation</i>	

A statement detailing the stormwater management services provided (if levied).
Clause 217(1)(e) Local Government (General) Regulation

Stormwater projects during 2019-20 included:

- Refurbishment of Townsend Street constructed wetland (water quality improvement device) in Forster.
- Audit of Gross pollutant traps
- Completion of refurbishment of 60% of the gross pollutant traps within the MCC LGA.
- Procurement of contractor to undertake detailed design of Dunns Creek water quality improvement wetland

A statement detailing the coastal protection services provided (if levied).
Clause 217(1)(e1) Local Government (General) Regulation

A coastal services charge is not levied within the MidCoast Local Government Area.

Statement on activities relating to enforcing and ensuring compliance with the Companion Animals Act and Regulation

Clause 217(1)(f) Local Government (General) Regulation, and Guidelines on the Exercise of Functions under the Companion Animals Act

Lodgement of pound data collection returns with the Division <i>16.2(a) Guidelines</i>	Completed
Lodgement of data relating to dog attacks with the Division <i>16.2(b) Guidelines</i>	Completed
Amount of funding spent on companion animal management and activities <i>16.2(c) Guidelines</i>	Approximately \$50,000 for the management of pound facilities and animal control equipment (not including wages)
Companion animal community education programs carried out <i>16.2(d) Guidelines</i>	Nil
Strategies council has in place to promote and assist the de-sexing of dogs and cats <i>16.2(d) Guidelines</i>	Nil
Strategies in place to comply with the requirement under section 64 of the Act to seek alternatives to euthanasia for unclaimed animals <i>16.2(e) Guidelines</i>	Animals are released to Animal Welfare Groups for no fee. Minimal animals are euthanased. Animals which are euthanased are classified under the Companion Animals Act as unsuitable for rehoming.
Off leash areas provided in the council area <i>16.2(f) Guidelines</i>	Total of three leash free areas – Taree, Tuncurry and Gloucester

We have seen a minor reduction (2.5%) in the number of animals visiting our pounds.

- 282 dogs and cats processed through the pounds
- 46% (130) rehomed in partnership with animal welfare agencies
- 35% (100) collected by their owners
- 18% (52) classified under the Companion Animals Act as unsuitable for rehoming and euthanased

Report on capital works projects.

Capital Expenditure Guidelines

Biripi Way

MidCoast Council is currently undertaking a project to consolidate our administration functions into a central location at 2 Biripi Way, Taree.

The new head office will provide space for 400 staff, currently working across three administrative buildings in Taree and Forster, as well as a customer service centre, Council Chambers and room for future growth.

The project has been regularly reported to Council. The project remains on budget and on target to open in January 2021.

Forster Civic Precinct

The Forster Civic Precinct development is currently on hold, due to financial difficulties being experienced by the developer as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic.

The project will ultimately deliver a number of MidCoast Council facilities to the community including a new public library, visitor information centre and customer service point.

The building is being undertaken by developer Enyoc, who entered an agreement with Council for the design and construction of these community facilities.

A legal contract is in place with the developer and at this point in time both parties aim to deliver the project in accordance with this contract.

The \$18 million project cost remains a joint project between Council, the Federal Government and Enyoc, with each party contributing \$6 million. As with many projects supported by Government funding, funds are spent by Council and then recouped from the Government as per the funding agreement. This does result in an outlay of funds by Council which are then reimbursed.

The obligations of the Federal funding agreement for the project are being met and Council has been in contact with the Federal Government regarding the delays on the project.

Council is discussing the timeframes with the developer and will inform the community when work resumes.

Councils considered to be ‘human services agencies’ under the Carers Recognition (CR) Act (provide services directed at Carers and/or people being cared for by carers) must report on compliance with the CR Act for the reporting period.

Section 8(2) Carers Recognition Act 2010

MidCoast Council delivers services for older people, people with disability and their carers through MidCoast Assist and, as such, is considered a human services agency for the purposes of the Carers (Recognition) Act 2010.

During the reporting period Council has worked to ensure that service delivery activities and policies and procedures reflect the principles of the NSW Carers Charter.

Actions Taken include:

- Both MidCoast Assist Ageing and Disability Services routinely and regularly consult with individual carers at intake stage and throughout the program for clients. This is reflected in the forms, processes and file notes maintained by MidCoast Assist
- MidCoast Assist refers carers to available supports within the community and online as appropriate.
- In response to carers of older people with dementia, MidCoast Assist has extended some centre-based activities to enable more free time for carers.
- In response to COVID 19, MidCoast Assist suspended some group activities. Recognising the additional stress this might have placed on carers, MidCoast Assist organised online/virtual experiences for clients and conducted regular welfare checks with clients and carers, especially those who had become more isolated during COVID 19 pandemic until it was safe to resume face to face services. A client satisfaction survey conducted by MidCoast Assist revealed that clients and carers were overwhelming positive about MidCoast Assist’s response to the COVID 19 pandemic
- MidCoast Assist continues to support carers under stress to access support services through Commonwealth Respite Carelink Centre (for older clients) and expanding provision of respite services for NDIS participants at request of carers.

Information on the implementation of Council’s Disability Inclusion Plan.

Section 13(1) Disability Inclusion Act 2014

MidCoast Council's Disability Inclusion Action Plan (DIAP) was adopted on 28 June 2017, and the Plan was registered with the Disability Council of NSW.


An implementation plan has been developed to support delivery of DIAP actions. The “*Disability Inclusion Action Plan Progress Report 2018-19*” provided below, outlines progress made during the year.

We continued our focus on education during the year, which has led to a greater awareness of needs of people with disability as Council staff continue their day-to-day activities. Subsequent years of activities under the Plan will build on this foundation, supporting the development and delivery of initiatives that are meaningful and sustainable.

In order to comply with the requirements of the Act, Council’s DIAP progress will be reported in the 2017-18 Annual Report and provided to the Minister for Disability Services.



Disability Inclusion Action Plan Progress Report 2018-19

Strategy 1: Positive community attitudes and behaviours

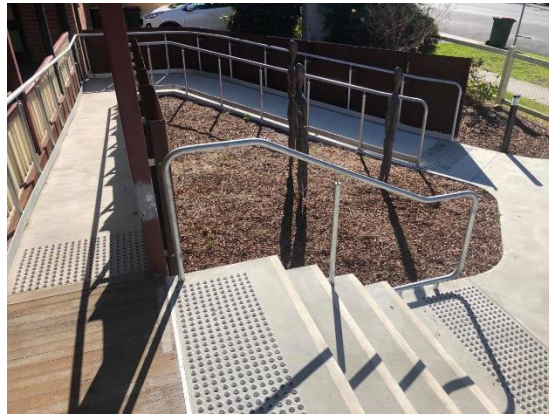
Area for Action	Status update
<p>Council contacts for access issues and assistance with community projects</p>	<p>A decision was made on the most effective platform for a Community Directory, and we entered into an agreement with a not-for-profit organisation with a proven track record in hosting directories for a number of councils in the mid-north and north coast of NSW. Considerable work was involved in the set-up of the directory, and launch events occurred in February 2020.</p> <p>The directory is supported by an App for mobile devices, and the package provides information to residents and visitors on services available. The site is WCAG compliant, and the supplier is currently working to implement voice enabling to the platform.</p> <p>The Community Strengthening team continues to work to raise awareness of the Directory in the community, and encourage service providers to list their services for free.</p>
<p>Council staff awareness of the needs of people with disability</p>	<p>Council staff continued to host “Scoot Aware” information sessions for the MidCoast Community. The workshops provide information on</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Who can use a mobility scooter? • Choosing a scooter that’s right for you • Scooter users’ rights and responsibilities • Road rules • Staying safe  <p style="text-align: right;">Scoot Aware training</p>

Strategy 2: Creating liveable communities

Area for Action	Status update
<p>Footpaths</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Approximately 300-400m of Queen Street in Gloucester has been upgraded, with improvements to pathways and crossings. • The traffic crossing facility at Cross Street in Old Bar has been upgraded.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Primrose Street in Wingham has been upgraded to improve footpath and crossing facilities. • As part of the Livvi's Place (accessible playground) project, accessible parking and kerb ramps have been provided in River Street, pedestrian movement facilities have been improved in Fotheringham Park, and a new pathway has been constructed around the new accessible toilet block in Fotheringham Park • Consultation with community for the Draft Pedestrian Access and Mobility Plan, including a Bike Plan was delayed by bushfires in the area in September. The Draft Plan has now been developed and will be placed on public exhibition early in the 2020/21 financial year. • Construction of a footpath wide enough for mobility scooter use, in Tea Gardens, opposite the shopping area was delayed due to bushfires and the Covid-19 pandemic, but is planned to commence in the 2020/21 financial year. • As part of planning to complete a pedestrian link between Gloucester and Barrington, Council worked with RMS to include pathways on the Barrington Bridge. Funds are now being sought to complete the link on either side of the bridge.
Pedestrian crossings	<p>The feasibility of installing kerb-to-kerb pedestrian crossings was investigated for busy locations in Forster, but was cost prohibitive due to drainage considerations and the fact that the crossing would be retro-fitted. Consideration will be given to pedestrian crossings during the design phase of roadworks as has been done in Tea Gardens, where kerb-to-kerb crossings are being trialled on Marine Drive.</p>
Accessible housing	<p>Strategic Planning has developed a Housing Strategy for MCC, with a draft placed on public exhibition from February to April. Feedback will be considered and be reported back to council early in the 20/21 financial year.</p> <p>The draft strategy has been informed by consultation with housing service providers in order to ensure opportunities for the provision of different types of housing to suit the community's needs. The draft will also incorporate the need for accessible design principles to be included in medium-density developments.</p>
Accessible buildings	<p>Manning Aquatic & Leisure Centre amenities were upgraded to improve access</p> <div style="display: flex; justify-content: space-around;">   </div> <p>The Manning Regional Gallery was successful in obtaining a \$80,000 Regional Cultural Fund Grant for a \$170,000 upgrade of the Gallery. The project included a new disability access ramp, front entrance stairs, and an automatic opening front entrance door. These improvements create 'one' entrance for the Gallery and also replaced the dangerous disability ramp and</p>

front entrance stairs. The community has responded with great feedback about both the visual improvements and the inclusive single front entrance.



The Manning Entertainment Centre received an upgrade through the design and construction of a versatile flat floor studio space, making the facility more accessible and providing greater scope for inclusive entertainment. While the facility did have adequate access to the auditorium for mobility-impaired patrons and an extensive hearing aid loop covering the entire auditorium, it did not have adequate access to the stage, or accessible toilet facilities in the back stage. The new flat floor ensures it is versatile and accessible to all. The new auditorium will have a retractable seating bank for 160 patrons with 4 wheelchair spaces. Care has been taken to ensure the seating bank will be comfortable and have adequate hand rails and support for the mobility impaired. The new auditorium will have an extensive hearing loop for patrons with hearing impairment. The studio space will also have accessible toilet facilities in both the front-of-house areas and back stage, with the facilities having the capacity to be shared between the two venues greatly improving access.

The PA system upgrade at the Manning Entertainment Centre main auditorium is complete. The new system provides incredible clarity for vocal recognition and has improved coverage across the auditorium, greatly improving the experience of patrons. The improved clarity of the system can be transmitted through the current hearing loop for the benefit of the hearing impaired.

Despite delays resulting from restrictions associated with the Covid-19 pandemic, construction progressed for Council areas within the civic precinct, including a new library for Forster, and will be compliant with the requirements of the Building Code of Australia and relevant parts of accessibility requirements of AS 1428.1 Design for access and mobility - Part 1 General requirements, including:

- open, inclusive spaces from street, continuing throughout all public and staff areas;
- all floor and pavement grades, thresholds, doorways, stairs etc;
- circulation space to all doorways;
- lift access to library and carpark. All access stairs include contrasting nosings, tactile indicators and compliant hand rails;
- all public and staff areas accessible including public interface counters;
- public accessible facilities on ground floor including unisex accessible toilet and both male and female ambulant toilets; and
- accessible facilities for staff on both levels.

An upgrade to the Nabiac Library was completed. Works include:

- More accessible shelving;
- Additional seating options;
- Repair of floor and replacement of carpet to enhance mobility.



Construction has commenced on Council's centralised head office at Biripi Way in Taree. A professional Disability Access Consultant was engaged to provide advice throughout the design process. Some of the accessibility design outcomes of this include;

- Correct circulation space for wheel chairs throughout the building
- The use of ramps rather than stairs throughout the building
- Provision of accessible parking
- Signage includes braille and provision for sight impairment (colour, font and text size)
- Hearing augmentation in all major gathering areas
- Tactile indicators where required
- Vision-safety strips installed on all glazing to assist the vision impaired
- Heights of all tables and work surfaces adjusted to suit wheelchair access
- Provision of disability access lockers
- Sit-to-stand desks can be lowered to wheelchair height
- Thought given to heights of power points, room booking panels, etc
- Contrasting flooring choices and colours to highlight changes in floor height.

Funding was secured for:

- the installation of an elevator at the Wingham library. A Development Application for the works has been lodged, and it is hoped the project will be completed within 12-18 months

- works to the Forster Community Centre (the headquarters of MidCoast Assist). The upgrade will include improved access.

Council worked with community groups to secure funding and implement improvements at the following premises which are not owned or managed by Council:

- Upgrade of Marlee Community Hall's exterior including access






- Upper Lansdowne Hall: toilet upgrade to improve access

- Coopernook Hall: toilet upgrade to improve access



- Cundletown Hall: improved access
- Dundaloo Services: accessible recreation facilities for people with disabilities and their families
- Valley Industries: amenities upgrade
- John's River Hall – improved access



	<p>Planning on the MC1 Project (council software upgrades) progressed. The project will include a building inspection results section which will allow for needs-based priority list to be created.</p> <p>Funding applications were submitted for an upgrade to the Senior Citizens hall in Gloucester including upgraded flooring and a hearing loop integration. Senior Citizens, Gloucester Arts and Cultural Council Inc (GACCI) and U3A are all major users of the facility.</p>
<p>Accessible recreational facilities</p> <p>Accessible green space</p> <p>Public toilet and shower facilities</p>	<p>Fish-cleaning stations were upgraded at Endeavour Park in Taree and Manning Point, and are now include accessible fish-cleaning tables.</p> 
	<p>The picnic facilities at Forster Ocean Baths were upgraded and now include accessible picnic tables, and an accessible BBQ. Access to the picnic area and amenities block was rebuilt to ensure improved access.</p>   <p>The public amenities block in Little Street, Forster, was refurbished and now includes completely accessible toilets.</p>



The Variety Livvi's Place all-abilities playground was completed and opened to the public. The play space, located in Fotheringham Park, Taree, involved a partnership with Variety Children's Charity, with considerable funding contributed by NSW Department of Premier and Cabinet, NSW Department of Planning and Environment, Foundation for Rural and Regional Renewal, Dundaloo Services and Newcastle Permanent, and time and resources from a number of Council departments (Community Services, Property and Commercial Services and Community Spaces Recreation and Trades).

The project includes accessible parking and a new, accessible amenities block with lift-and-change facilities, funded by Department of Family & Community Services (administered by LGNSW).



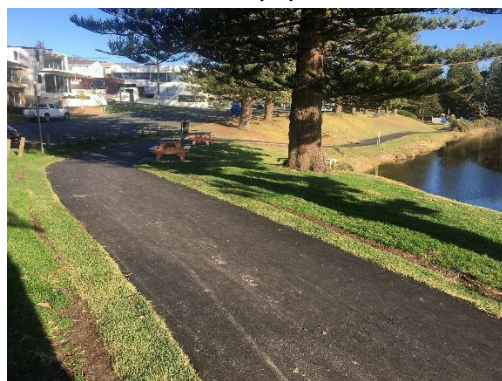
A multi-purpose pavilion was constructed at Stroud Showground which includes an ambulant and 4 accessible toilets.



Accessible toilets were installed at

- Allen Park (Stroud)
- Aub Ferris Park at Nahiack
- Cooperbrook toilet block near the river

Works were completed to connect existing pathways and include some outdoor exercise equipment at Blackhead.



- An upgrade to Tea Gardens Hawks Nest Surf Life Saving Club was completed, providing 5 cubicles, one of which is accessible.
- Gloucester Recreation Ground was upgraded to provide all-abilities access.
- Upgrades to facilities at Boronia Park (Forster) were undertaken to ensure improved access. The netball area is completed and works to the soccer area are in progress.
- Harrington Dog Park and Foreshore was upgraded with the replacement of the BBQ shelter and seating to provide improved access.

The following plans were progressed for installation/construction during the 2020/21 financial year:

- The demolition and rebuild of amenities at Pebbly Beach (Forster).
- A new amenities block including an accessible toilet at Croki, with funding secured for the works.
- Planning commenced for an upgrade to the accessible ramp at Forster Ocean Baths.
- Planning commenced for the installation of an accessible fish-cleaning station at Crowdy Head.

Strategy 3: Supporting access to meaningful employment

Area for Action	Status update
Employer awareness of the value that people with disability can offer	Planning for a staff census progressed – in order to better understand the composition of our workforce and how the organisation can assist those who need it.

Strategy 4: Improving access to services through better systems and processes

Area for Action	Status update
Access to information on available services	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Readspeaker is fully functional on Council's website, enabling customers to listen to a page in audio, or highlight any section of text on any page to listen to the selected text. • Council's website continues to be improved in terms of quality and streamlining of forms on our website. Information on road projects has been greatly improved. • A wheel in/out service is offered for a fee, for customers who don't have ability to wheel their bins out for weekly collection.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Residents can report illegal dumping online, eliminating the need to visit a council office, or make a phone call;• The mobile Community Recycling Centre continued to visit remote communities to assist them with disposal of problematic waste such as paint, gas bottles, oil and batteries.• Council meetings are now live streamed, proving the opportunity for anyone in the community to listen to proceedings.• Library Services continues to invest in and enhance its other services, including:<ul style="list-style-type: none">- a significant collection of large-print and audio books;- home library lending service, delivering books to people who have difficulty leaving their homes;- substantial dyslexic and literacy collections;- a significantly expanding collection of eBooks and eAudio - online content was improved by 11% during the Covid-19 period;- delivery of virtual story-time for children;- Author and workshop events being held by Zoom – open to all residents;- a wide variety of online databases and other resources;- availability of 24/7 online services, including access to the catalogue and membership details.
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Particulars of compliance with and effect of planning agreements (VPA) in force during the year.

Section 93G(5) Environmental Planning and Assessment Act 1979

VPA	Overview	Status
661 The Lakes Way Darawank (2018)	Agreement between Council and Raymond John Hill & Susan Eve Hill regarding dedication of a Biodiversity Lot in exchange for 2 residential lots	Current – no activity during reporting period.
Carmona Dr, South Forster (2012)	Agreement between Council and Acornlane P/L and Homeborn P/L and the Minister for Environment in connection with rezoning of land. Relates to environmental restoration works and dedication of land to the Minister	Current – half of the environmental lands (eastern portion – ‘The Saddle’) previously dedicated to the State. No further activity during reporting period.
Seven Mile Beach, The Lakes Way, South Forster (2007)	Agreement between Council and Seven Mile Beach Holdings Pty Ltd in connection with rezoning of land	Current- no activity during reporting period.
5-9 Wallis Street, Forster (2007)	Agreement between Council and Sabace No. 2 Pty Ltd regarding the payment of contributions to Council for traffic and carparking facilities.	Current- no activity during reporting period.
Gloucester River Run (2019)	Agreement between Council and Gloucester River Run Pty Ltd and Brian and Heather Beesley regarding the rezoning of land. Requires land dedication to Council, bio-diversity off-sets via a vegetation management plan and requires any development over the site to meet a set of water quality objectives.	Current – \$20,000 bank guarantee lodged with Council during reporting period.
210 Diamond Beach Road, Diamond Beach (2013)	Agreement between Council and SAF Properties P/L regarding the provision of environmental corridors and community infrastructure such as access, facilities and landscaping.	Current – DA (317/2012/DA) for subdivision approved 01/05/13 but no activity.
310 Diamond Beach Road, Diamond Beach (2012)	Agreement between Council, Machiko P/L and the NSW Minister for the Environment regarding the dedication of environmental offset lands to the Minister and to dedicate a road widening and construct a footpath.	Completed – Offset lands previously dedicated to NSW government. DA for subdivision (324/2013/DA) approved on 25/11/13 – dedication of road reserve widening and footpath construction now completed.
363 Diamond Beach Road, Diamond Beach (2017)	Agreement between Council and Seashells Ltd regarding preparation of a Public Access Strategy by Council and adoption by 11/10/20 and subsequent dedication of land and a footpath providing public access along the eastern boundary by the developer.	Current – Council engaged consultant to prepare strategy during reporting period.

391 Diamond Beach Road, Diamond Beach (2019)	Agreement between Council and Sybury Pty Limited regarding preparation of a Public Access Strategy by Council and adoption by 11/10/20 and subsequent dedication of land and a footpath providing public access along the eastern boundary by the developer.	Current – agreement signed and Council engaged consultant to prepare strategy during reporting period.
90 High Street, Black Head (2014)	Agreement between Council and Halliday Shores Retirement Living P/L regarding the provision of landscaping.	Current – vegetation establishment yet to be completed.
303 Blackhead Road, Hallidays Point (2010)	Agreement between Council, John Earnings P/L, Island Point Plantations P/L, and Brichris P/L regarding the dedication of lands and associated works at Tallwoods Village, Hallidays Point.	Current – DA (407/2017/DA) for Manufactured Homes Estate refused on 08/11/17 by Council – DA subject to an appeal under the NSW Land & Environment Court during reporting period (hearing date Sept 2020).
323 Blackhead Road, Hallidays Point (2010)	Agreement between Council and Benvenutos regarding dedication of lands and associated works at Tallwoods Village, Hallidays Point.	Current – DA for subdivision (567/2019/DA) approved 27/09/11 but no activity.
Harrington Waters Estate (2007)	Agreement between Council and Roche Group P/L regarding provision of a Library and Community Centre at Harrington.	Current – no activity during reporting period.
Precinct 1 Old Bar (2010)	Agreement between Council, Riverside Canal Developments P/L, R and N Lauder, R and U Scadden and R Peet regarding dedication of land and construction of a pedestrian/cycle path and associated lighting.	Current – no activity during reporting period.
Precinct 2B Old Bar (2008)	Agreement between Council and Mr Walsh regarding dedication of land and a dwelling entitlement.	Current – no activity during reporting period.
Palms Oasis Caravan Park (2020)	Agreement between Council and Ina Operations Pty Ltd regarding dedication of a Biodiversity Lot to Council and payment of a monetary contribution towards ongoing management.	Current – agreement signed during reporting period.
Tropic Gardens Drive, Smiths Lake (2013)	Agreement between Council and Overpa P/L regarding the rezoning of land at Tropic Gardens Dr. Relates to environmental restoration works and protection of land.	Current – no activity during reporting period.
Tallwoods Eastern Lands (2010)	Agreement between Council and Tallwoods P/L regarding the rehabilitation, embellishment and maintenance of vegetation and bushfire asset protection zones.	Current – no activity during reporting period.
Brimbin (2014)	Agreement between Council and Roche Group P/L regarding the requirement to undertake further master planning of the new town prior to subdivision occurring, to commit the developer to fund the regional	Current – landowner lodged Development Control Plan application during reporting period to commence master planning.

road network upgrades required due to this development, to dedicate land required for community and open space purposes and to fund a Community Development Worker for 20 years.

Brimbin biodiversity offset land (2015)	Agreement between Council , Roche Group P/L and the NSW Minister for the Environment regarding the dedication of environmental offset lands to the Minister	Completed – offset land dedicated to Minister for National Parks & Wildlife during reporting period
FIGTREES on the Manning (2010)	Agreement between Council, Chase Taree Developments P/L, Hocana P/L and Spsychala regarding the provision of public infrastructure associated with redevelopment of the former Lower Manning Dairy Cooperative at Chatham.	Current – the infrastructure on public land is being funded from a Commonwealth grant. The VPA will need to be revised following completion of these works.
Kolodong Estate, Kolodong Road, Taree (2019)	Agreement between Council, Wayne Peter Green & Nancy Jean Green and Benwaydan Pty Ltd regarding the landowner contributing to the cost of an intersection upgrade at Kolodong/Wingham Rd's if Council undertakes the works prior to the development proceeding.	Current – agreement signed during reporting period.
North Shearwater at Tea Gardens (2012)	Agreement between Council and Wolin Investments P/L in connection with the rezoning of the land. Relates to environmental restoration and dedication of significant land to Council	Current - partly implemented by commencement of restoration works.
Chapmans Rd, Tuncurry (2008)	Robert Leo Wilson and Claude Stanley Wilson regarding the rezoning of land. Requires land dedication to a conservation authority or Council and the preparation of a DCP.	Current - partly implemented by preparation of a DCP.
Murray Road, Wingham (2018)	Agreement between Council and Duncan's Holdings Limited regarding creation of a central drainage corridor and vegetation reserve and subsequent dedication to Council.	Current – no action during reporting period.

Recovery and threat abatement plans – Councils identified in a plan as responsible for implementation of measures included in the plan, to report on actions taken to implement measures as to the state of the environment in its area.

Section 220ZT Fisheries Management Act 1994

Not applicable to MidCoast Council

Details of inspections of private swimming pools. Include:

- **number of inspections of tourist and visitor accommodation**
- **number of inspections of premises with more than 2 dwellings**
- **number of inspections that resulted in issuance of certificate of compliance under section 22D of the Act**
- **number of inspections that resulted in issuance of a certificate of non compliance under clause 18BA of the Regulation**

Section 22F(2) Swimming Pools Act 1992, and Clause 18BC Swimming Pools Regulation 2008 (SP Reg)

- 30 Inspections of tourist and visitor pools.
- 26 Inspections of properties with more than two dwellings.
- 188 Inspections resulted in the issuance of compliance certificate.
- 112 Inspections resulted in the issuance of a non-compliance certificate.

Information included on Government Information Public Access activity.
*Section 125(1) Government Information (Public Access) Act 2009, and Clause 8
 Schedule 2 Government Information (Public Access) Regulation 2018*

2019-20

Annual reporting requirements under section 125 of the Government Information (Public Access) Act 2009 (GIPA Act) require agencies to prepare and submit an annual report on their obligations under the GIPA Act within four months of the end of the reporting period. For NSW Local Government Councils, being agencies under the GIPA Act, this date is 31 October and the reports are to be made to the Minister for Local Government.

Clause 8 of the Government Information (Public Access) Regulation 2009 sets out the information that agencies must include in their GIPA Act Annual Reports. Those requirements are set out below and are followed by Council's response.

Clause 8(a) - Details of the review carried out by the agency (MidCoast Council) under Section 7(3) of the Act during the reporting year and the details of any information made publicly available by the agency as a result of the review.

Reviews carried out by the agency	Information made publicly available by the agency
No	No

Clause 8(b) - The total number of access applications received by the agency (MidCoast Council) during the reporting year (including withdrawn applications but not including invalid applications).

Total number of applications received 45

Clause 8(c) - The total number of access applications received by the agency (MidCoast Council) during the reporting year that the agency refused, either wholly or partly, because the application was for the disclosure of information referred to in Schedule 1 to the Act (information for which there is conclusive presumption of overriding public interest against disclosure).

Number of Applications Refused	Wholly	Partly	Total
	0	2	2
% total	0%	100%	

Schedule 2 Statistical information about access applications

Table A: Number of applications by type of applicant and outcome*

	Access granted in full	Access granted in part	Access refused in full	Info not held	Info already available	Refuse to deal with application	Refuse to confirm / deny	Application withdrawn	Total	% of total
Media	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0%
Members of Parliament	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0%
Private sector business	2	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	2	4%
Not for profit organisations or community groups	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	2%
Members of the public (application by legal representative)	3	5	0	3	1	1	0	1	14	28%
Members of the public (other)	10	14	0	2	2	4	0	1	33	66%
Total	15	20	0	5	3	5	0	2	50	
% of total	33%	44%	0%	7%	4%	7%	0%	4%		

* More than one decision can be made in respect of a particular access application. If so, a recording must be made in relation to each such decision. This also applies to Table B.

Table B: Number of applications by type of application and outcome

	Access granted in full	Access granted in part	Access refused in full	Info not held	Info already available	Refuse to deal with application	Refuse to confirm / deny whether info is held	Application withdrawn	Total	% of total
Personal information applications*	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	2	4%
Access applications (other than personal information applications)	13	18	0	4	3	5	0	2	45	90%
Access applications that are partly personal information applications and partly other	0	2	0	1	0	0	0	0	3	6%
Total	15	20	0	5	3	5	0	2	50	
% of total	30%	04%	0%	10%	6%	10%	0%	4%		

* A personal information application is an access application for personal information (as defined in clause 4 of Schedule 4 to the Act) about the applicant (the applicant being an individual).

Table C: Invalid applications

Reason for invalidity	Number of applications	% of total
Application does not comply with formal requirements (section 41 of the Act)	1	100%
Application is for excluded information of the agency (section 43 of the Act)	0	0%
Application contravenes restraint order (section 110 of the Act)	0	0%
Total number of invalid applications received	1	100%
Invalid applications that subsequently became valid applications	0	0%

Table D: Conclusive presumption of overriding public interest against disclosure: matters listed in Schedule 1 of Act

	Number of times consideration used*	% of total
Overriding secrecy laws	0	0%
Cabinet information	0	0%
Executive Council information	0	0%
Contempt	0	0%
Legal professional privilege	2	100%
Excluded information	0	0%
Documents affecting law enforcement and public safety	0	0%
Transport safety	0	0%
Adoption	0	0%
Care and protection of children	0	0%
Ministerial code of conduct	0	0%
Aboriginal and environmental heritage	0	0%
Total	2	

* More than one public interest consideration may apply in relation to a particular access application and, if so, each such consideration is to be recorded (but only once per application). This also applies in relation to Table E.

Table E: Other public interest considerations against disclosure: matters listed in table to section 14 of Act

	Number of times consideration used*	% of total
Responsible and effective government	4	15%
Law enforcement and security	0	0%
Individual rights, judicial processes and natural justice	14	52%
Business interests of agencies and other persons	9	33%
Environment, culture, economy and general matters	0	0%
Secrecy provisions	0	0%
Exempt documents under interstate Freedom of Information legislation	0	0%
Total	27	

Table F: Timeliness

	Number of applications	% of total
Decided within the statutory timeframe (20 days plus any extensions)	43	96%
Decided after 35 days (by agreement with applicant)	0	0%
Not decided within time (deemed refusal)	2	4%
Total	45	

Table G: Number of applications reviewed under Part 5 of the Act (by type of review and outcome)

	Decision varied	Decision upheld	Total	% of total
Internal review	2	1	3	60%
Review by Information Commissioner*	0	0	0	0%
Internal review following recommendation under section 93 of Act	2	0	2	40%
Review by ADT	0	0	0	0%
Total	4	1	5	
% of total	80%	20%		

* The Information Commissioner does not have the authority to vary decisions, but can make recommendations to the original decision-maker. The data in this case indicates that a recommendation to vary or uphold the original decision has been made by the Information Commissioner.

Table H: Applications for review under Part 5 of the Act (by type of applicant)

	Number of applications for review	% of total
Applications by access applicants	4	100%
Applications by persons to whom information the subject of access application relates (see section 54 of the Act)	0	0%
Total	4	

Table I: Applications transferred to other agencies

	Number of applications transferred	% of total
Agency-initiated transfers	0	0%
Applicant-initiated transfers	0	0%
Total	0	

Information included on public interest disclosure activity.
Section 31 Public Interest Disclosure Act 1994 and Clause 4 Public Interest Disclosures Regulation 2011

**MID-COAST COUNCIL
PUBLIC INTEREST DISCLOSURES ACT 1994
ANNUAL REPORT 2019-2020**

Annual reporting requirements under section 31 of the *Public Interest Disclosures Act 1994* (PID Act) require agencies to prepare and submit an annual report on their obligations under the PID Act within 4 months of the end of the reporting period. For NSW Local Government Councils, being agencies under the PID Act, this date is 31 October and the reports are to be made to the Minister for Local Government.

The *Public Interest Disclosures Regulation 2011* sets out the information that agencies must include in their PID Act Annual Reports. Those requirements are set out below.

1. Statistical Information on PIDs

	July 2019 - June 2020
Number of public officials who made PIDs	4
Number of PIDs received	4
Of PIDs received, number primarily about:	
Corrupt Conduct	4
Maladministration	0
Serious and substantial waste	0
Government information contravention	0
Local government pecuniary interest contravention	0
Number of PIDs finalised	2

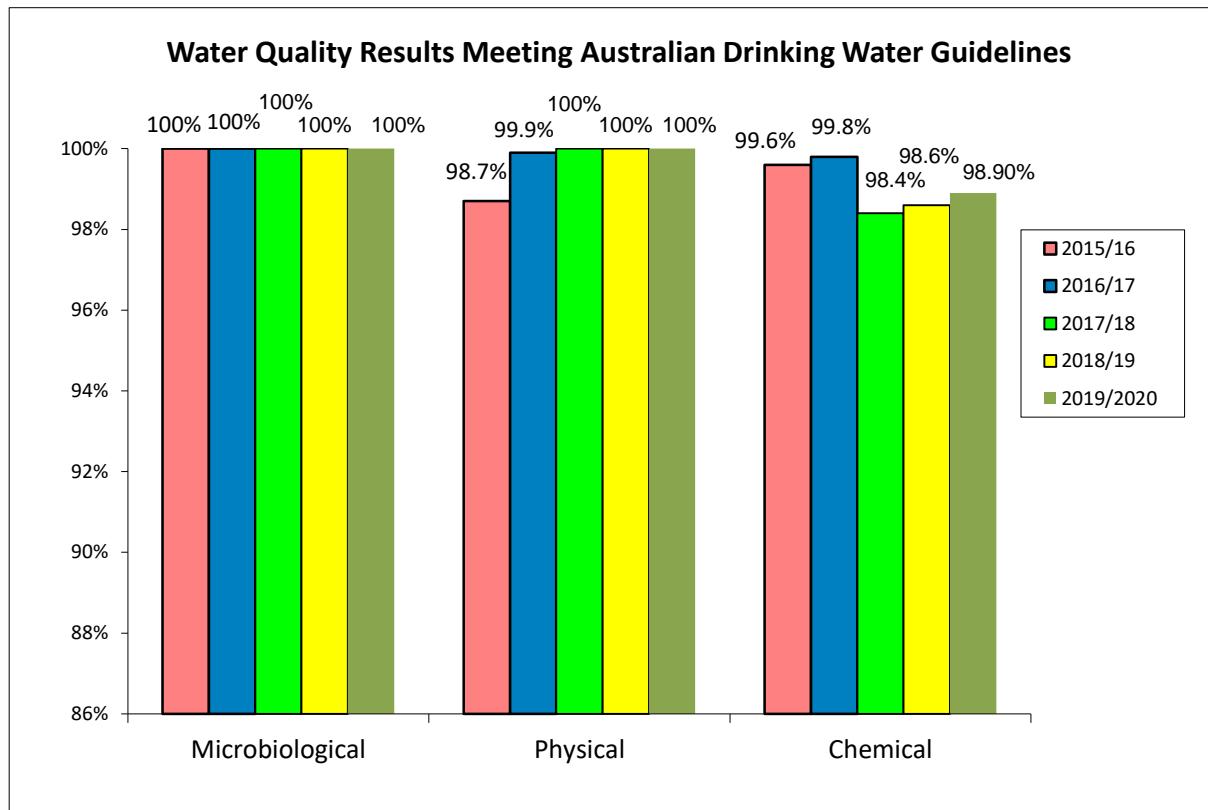
2. Commentary on PID Obligations

2.1 MidCoast Council has established an internal reporting policy. The current version of this policy was adopted by Council on 11 March 2020.

2.2 The General Manager of MidCoast Council (as head of the public authority) has taken action to ensure that staff have been made aware of their obligations under the PID Act. Training has been conducted for staff, both indoor and outdoor, by the Governance team as well as inclusion within Council's Induction Program for new staff. A suite of reporting tools has been developed and is available for staff to access on the Intranet. Fifteen PID Officers from various positions within the organisation have been recruited after calling for expressions of interest. They have now been trained in the role and posters with their contact details are located at all sites.

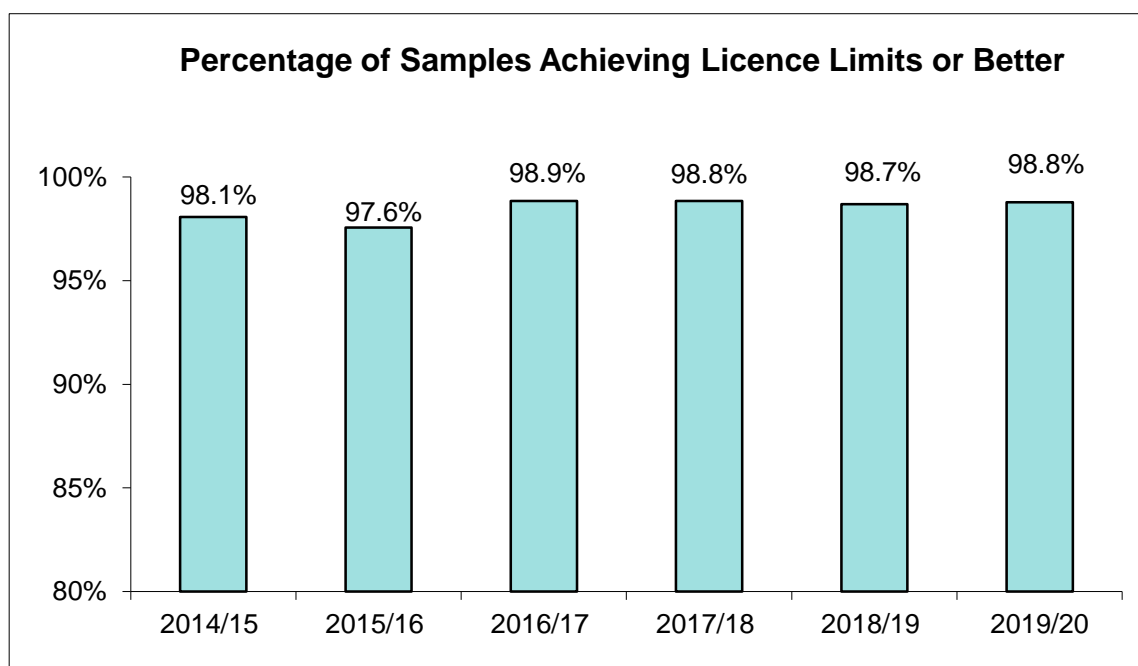
Compliance with the Australian Drinking Water Guidelines (ADWG)

During the 2019-20 year, water quality results of samples collected in the reticulation system within Australian Drinking Water Guidelines are presented below, compared with the previous four years.



Compliance with environmental protection licences

The compliance trend for 2019/20 year compared to the last five years is shown in the graph below representing effluent samples collected from all sewage treatment plants to confirm compliance with EPA licences concentration limits.



Compliance with the NSW Government's Best Practice Management of Water Supply and Sewerage Framework

As a Council responsible for water supply and sewerage services, MidCoast Council must comply with the requirements of the *Local Government Act 1993* as well as the NSW Government's Best-Practice Management of Water Supply and Sewerage Framework.

The six elements of the framework are:

1. Integrated Water Cycle Management Strategy and Financial Plan

The Best Practice Framework requires the review of our integrated water cycle management strategy every eight years. The development of our integrated water cycle management strategy 'Our Water Our Future' has identified long term solutions for MidCoast Council's water and sewerage services in accordance with the requirements of the framework. The draft integrated water cycle management strategy and summary document were placed on public exhibition from 15 December 2015 until 26 February 2016 and subsequently adopted by the board in March 2016 and then submitted to DPI Water. Initial work, including secure yield studies, has started on the next revision of our integrated water cycle management strategy. This is due to be adopted for the 2021-22 financial year.

2. Water conservation measures

MidCoast Council has made significant progress with regards to water conservation through ongoing community education, engagement, and pricing. In 2018/2019 benchmarking the average domestic usage for our region was the 16th lowest in the state (out of 101 Local Water Utilities) and 8th lowest of the large (>10,000 connections) water utilities.

3. Strategic business plan

MidCoast Council Water Services' strategic business plan 'Future Directions 2018-2048' adopted in 2018 complies with the timeframes and requirements of the *Local Government Act 1993* and the Best-Practice Framework. MidCoast Council has developed and adopted a drinking water quality management system in accordance with NSW Health regulations.

4. Drought management plan

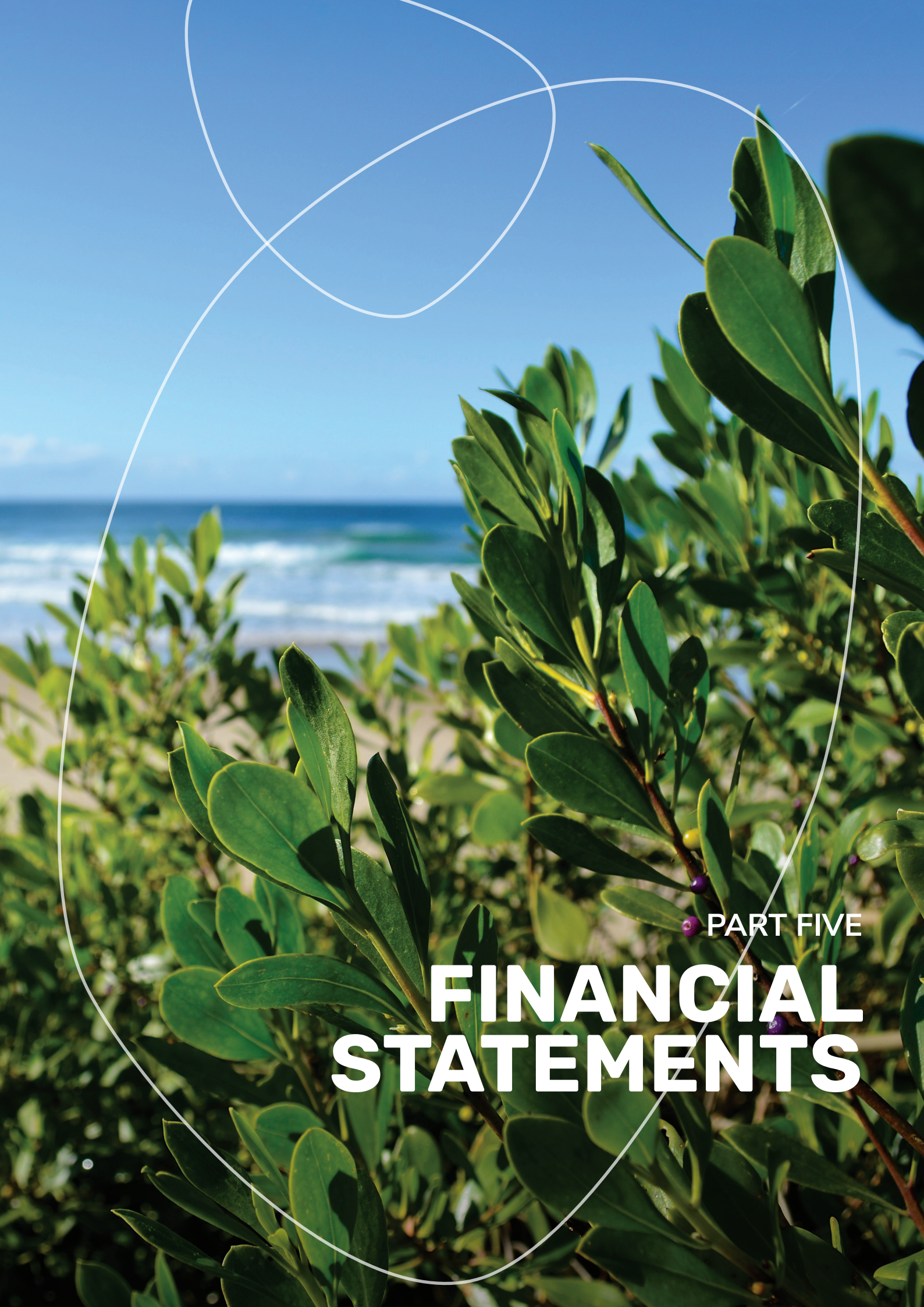
In 2019-20, MidCoast Council updated its draft Drought Management Plan to include responses and lessons learnt from the recent drought. Consultation on the Drought Management Plan will occur as part of the integrated water cycle management strategy review.

5. Pricing and regulation of water supply, sewerage and trade waste

MidCoast Council complies with these requirements through the development of its long-term financial plan, development of servicing plans and ongoing implementation of its liquid trade waste policy.

6. Performance monitoring

MidCoast Council Water Services submitted its Triple Bottom Line Performance Report for 2019-20 according to NSW Water Utility Performance Monitoring System requirements, addressing economic, financial and social performance indicators, which are benchmarked against regional NSW and other Australian utilities.



PART FIVE

FINANCIAL STATEMENTS