

Port Stephens / Myall Lakes Estuary and Coastal Zone Consultative Committee

TERMS OF REFERENCE

The Port Stephens/Myall Lakes Estuary and Coastal Zone Consultative Committee was established by Port Stephens Council (PSC) and MidCoast Council (MCC) to develop the Port Stephens / Myall Lakes Estuary Management Plan (2000). Both Councils recognised the value in continuing the committee to provide stakeholder input on coastal management issues.

1. Name

The name of the committee shall be the **Port Stephens/Myall Lakes Estuary and Coastal Zone Consultative Committee** (the Estuary Committee).

2. Objective

The objective of the Estuary Committee is to provide strategic-level stakeholder advice to Port Stephens Council and MidCoast Council that will assist in the development of relevant Coastal Management Plans / Programs and associated studies.

3. Functions

The primary functions of the Estuary Committee are to:

- provide strategic level stakeholder input into the development and review of the Port Stephens Coastal Management Program and other relevant plans and associated studies taking into consideration best available scientific information and input from key stakeholders, interest groups and the wider community;
- disseminate relevant information and feedback to their representative group/organisation; for example industry groups, associations, community, or other staff within an organisation on the activities of the Estuary Committee.

4. Membership

4.1. Composition

The Estuary Committee shall be selected from the following:

- Boating industry interest (1)
- Community representative Great Lakes (3)
- Community representative Port Stephens (3)
- Department of Planning and Environment/ Office of Environment and Heritage (1)
- Department of Trade and Investment, Regional Infrastructure and Services/ Department of Primary Industries - Fisheries NSW/ Aquaculture, (1)
- Port Stephens - Great Lakes Marine Park (1)
- Department of Industry – Crown Lands and Water (1)
- Environmental interest group representative (1)
- MidCoast Council Councillor (1)
- MidCoast Council staff member (1)
- Hunter Local Land Services (1)

- Oyster Industry Representative (1)
- Port Stephens Council Councillor (1)
- Port Stephens Council staff member (1)
- Professional and amateur fishing industry (2)
- Relevant Aboriginal Land Council (2)
- Tourism Industry representative (1)
- Transport for NSW/ Roads and Maritime Services/ Hunter/Inland Regional Office Maritime – Newcastle (1)

Additional representatives from the above bodies, or other organisations, may attend meetings as required. Where possible there will be a balanced representation from both Port Stephens and MidCoast Council and respective local government areas. An individual may represent more than one organisation.

4.2. Appointment of Representatives

Representatives shall be selected following the advertisement of an Expression of Interest. Expressions of Interest will be assessed by Council Officers. The following criteria may be used to guide the assessment of nominations:

- (a) Knowledge, interest and/or skills of the nominee relevant to estuarine and/or coastal zone issues/management (including biodiversity, water, heritage, recreation and hazard issues/management);
- (b) Relevant community involvement;
- (c) An understanding of the role of Local Government;
- (d) Commitment to participative and consultative processes;
- (e) Willingness / ability to engage with their community on estuary and coastal zone management issues

The following is favourable but not essential:

- (f) Involvement with relevant interest groups; and
- (g) Ability to develop and sustain contacts with key individuals and groups within the local community.

An Eligibility List may be created if the number of suitable candidates exceeds the number required for the Committee.

Members of the Estuary Committee are considered volunteers under the relevant Council's volunteer policy. Volunteers are required to abide by the relevant codes of conduct, volunteer protocols and media policies, copies of which are available on request.

4.3. Term of Appointment

Appointments to the Estuary Committee are for a period of up to four years coinciding with the term of council or as otherwise determined by Council Officers. Unless otherwise notified by Council Officers, membership of the Estuary Committee shall cease one month after the general election of Council. Members of the committee may stand for re-appointment.

Membership positions vacated during the appointment period will be filled in accordance with Sections 4.1 and 4.2. If a government position becomes vacant, it can be filled by another suitable representative from the same body without requiring reappointment. If a government restructure affects committee membership, existing members can continue as committee members, or the restructured body can nominate other suitable representatives.

The membership list in Section 4.1 will be updated to reflect government restructures.

A community representative vacancy may be filled by another person drawn from the Eligibility List, or by another call for Expressions of Interest.

4.4. Cessation of Membership

A person ceases to be an Estuary Committee member if the person:

- resigns that membership in writing;
- is absent for three (3) consecutive meetings of the Estuary Committee without leave or apology; or
- has been found to have breached the relevant Council's Code of Conduct.

If a representative of one of the government bodies outlined in Section 6.1 ceases to be an Estuary Committee member, a new suitable representative of the body should be appointed by that organisation.

5. Operating Procedures

The following procedures will guide the operation of the Estuary Committee:

- (a) Committee meetings will be scheduled to coincide with the community consultation phase of the specific plan / program currently under development;
- (b) Project updates on relevant operational programs will be circulated to the committee on a quarterly basis. This will contain contact details of relevant officers to request further information;
- (c) Quarterly updates will also be requested from members;
- (d) A Port Stephens Council Officer will be appointed annually (at the end of the financial year) as Committee secretary and will provide administrative support;
- (e) The secretary will distribute draft minutes to all members after each committee meeting, for confirmation at the next ordinary meeting. Minutes are to be circulated within 1 (one) month of a meeting;
- (f) Proposed agenda items must be submitted at least 2 (two) weeks prior to each meeting using the supplied template for consideration by Council Officers for inclusion in the agenda;
- (g) All correspondence is to be passed through the Committee secretary;
- (h) A quorum shall consist of 6 (six) members, including a Council Officer. Any meetings of the Estuary Committee at which a quorum is not present shall not proceed;
- (i) The Estuary Committee will be chaired by a Councillor from either Port Stephens Council or MidCoast Council;
- (j) Special meetings of the Estuary Committee may be called by a Council Officer. At least 48 hours notice of special meetings shall be required to be given to all members of the Estuary Committee;
- (k) Limited term working groups may be convened to address specific issues and report to the Estuary Committee;
- (l) The Estuary Committee may request Council Officers, representatives of the community, volunteer organisations, interest groups, or representatives of government to provide further technical advice and assistance however acting on these requests will be at the sole discretion of Port Stephens Council and MidCoast Council and will have regard for any resourcing implications;
- (m) All members of the Committee are to report to their representative group (for example industry groups, associations, community, or other staff within an organisation) on the activities of the Estuary Committee;
- (n) Each Committee member will assist with delivering and achieving the tasks set out in this Terms of Reference;
- (o) Terms of Reference and Committee operations should be reviewed annually.
- (p) Any amendments to the Terms of Reference to be endorsed by an authorised council officer.

6. Dissolution of the Estuary Committee

The Estuary Committee may be dissolved by either Port Stephens Council or MidCoast Council.