



Terms of Reference

Community Focus Group (CFG) 2022

Tuggerah Lakes Entrance Options Paper - Tuggerah Lakes Coastal Management Program Stage 2 Study

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**Acknowledgement
of Country**

We acknowledge the traditional owners of the land on which we live, and pay our respects to elders past, present and emerging



A. PURPOSE

The purpose of the Community Focus Group (CFG) is to bring together intelligent, interested and inquisitive minds to be involved in the project and ensure that engagement is undertaken in a highly collaborative manner and that community attitudes and values are listened to, represented accurately and considered.

This process aligns with Council's Engagement Framework and Community Participation Plan.

B. BACKGROUND

Coastal Management Programs

Coastal Management Programs (CMPs) set the long-term strategy for the coordinated management of the coast, with a focus on achieving the objects and objectives of the *Coastal Management Act 2016* (CM Act).

CMPs identify coastal management issues and the actions required to address these issues in a strategic and integrated way.

CMPs detail how and when those actions are to be implemented, their costs and proposed cost-sharing arrangements and other viable funding mechanisms.

The CM Act (and other relevant legislation) establishes specific roles and responsibilities for relevant Ministers, the NSW Coastal Council, public authorities and local councils, as well as providing opportunities for communities to participate when preparing and implementing a CMP.

<https://www.environment.nsw.gov.au/topics/water/coasts/coastal-management/programs>

Acknowledging the size and diversity of the coastal zone of the Central Coast, Council is preparing three CMPs, focusing on Tuggerah Lakes, the Open Coast and Lagoons and the Hawkesbury-Nepean River System (including Brisbane Water). We're also working with Lake Macquarie City Council to develop a CMP for Lake Macquarie.

<https://www.yourvoiceourcoast.com/project-stage/coastal-management-programs>

Tuggerah Lakes Coastal Management Program

Tuggerah Lakes has been managed over the past decade or more, through the implementation of the Tuggerah Lakes Estuary Management Plan (EMP), prepared in 2006. The EMP has delivered a range of key achievements, including 50km of rural and urban stream rehabilitation, 648ha of wetland conservation and rehabilitation, 46ha of saltmarsh rehabilitation plus installation of community use assets (shared paths, boat ramps) and stormwater assets (gross pollutant traps, constructed wetlands). This has resulted in measurable improvements in ecological health in many places however a gap remains between the current state of the estuary, the current trajectory and the future expectations of both the community and coastal managers.



While the EMP has provided Council with an effective plan for the estuary, it is now somewhat dated and no longer meets current legislative and policy requirement set out by the NSW Government. Further, our understanding of the ecosystem condition and processes have improved over this time. As such, it is a good time to revisit the approach to management through a CMP that is consistent with the NSW coastal management framework.

Council has completed the first stage of the Tuggerah Lakes CMP with the completion of the Tuggerah Lakes Scoping Study (https://www.yourvoiceourcoast.com/sites/default/files/2021-09/tuggerah_lakes_cmp_scoping_study_accessible.pdf). This includes a Community and Stakeholder Engagement Strategy which helps guide community engagement throughout CMP development (https://www.yourvoiceourcoast.com/sites/default/files/2021-09/appendix_a_-_community_and_stakeholder_engagement_strategy.pdf)

We are now progressing with the completion of additional investigations as part of Stage 2. These studies are focused on addressing key knowledge gaps to support decision-making in the subsequent stages of the CMP planning process.

Tuggerah Lakes Entrance Options Paper

One key aspect to be investigated in Stage 2 is entrance management. Entrance management is typically a key focus area for the community, and having clear and implementable strategies to manage the entrance channel in the short, medium and long term is a priority of the CMP.

The development of the Tuggerah Lakes Entrance Options Paper offers an opportunity to engage with the community in a way which supports respectful two-way conversations, exploration of issues and options and guides future management of the entrance channel in an achievable and evidence-based manner.

The project will consider the natural coastal processes at play within the channel compartment and the estuary and the effect of various intervention measures on those processes. It will also specifically identify and assess the environmental, social, economic and community values of the entrance channel and the estuary more broadly, in order to explore and validate future management options. This is a key opportunity to have participate in a joint fact-finding and co-learning process to foster greater understanding and explore the management challenges through multiple lenses.

The information gathered from the technical assessments will facilitate development of the Options Paper, which will clearly communicate the various management options available in the short, medium and long-term, along with their corresponding benefits and/or impacts.

The CFG will be involved throughout this project and will be guided by qualified and experienced professionals who have been engaged by Council for the project. The project will carry forward the recommendations of the Tuggerah Lakes Expert Panel and establish holistic management recommendations which are underpinned by community values and align with the objects of the Coastal Management Act and the objectives of the CMP.



This work will follow on from the recently completed Tuggerah Lakes Entrance Management Study that developed an Interim Entrance Management Procedure that focused on interim flood risk management options to reduce flood impacts on the community ([https://cdn.centralcoast.nsw.gov.au/sites/default/files/Environment/Tuggerah Lakes Entrance Management Study 20220811.pdf](https://cdn.centralcoast.nsw.gov.au/sites/default/files/Environment/Tuggerah_Lakes_Entrance_Management_Study_20220811.pdf)).

The technical assessments and Options Paper developed during this project will assist in identifying the preferred option/s and directly inform subsequent development of a holistic Tuggerah Lakes Entrance Management Strategy during Stage 3 of the Tuggerah Lakes CMP that will guide entrance management in the longer term.

C. ROLE

The role of the CFG is to:

- C1 Be involved in the project to ensure that the community's values and attitudes are listened to, represented and considered.
- C2 The CFG has no authority to make decisions on behalf of the Council.
- C3 The CFG has no authority to direct Council staff or external consultants engaged for the project.

D. MEMBERSHIP

The CFG will comprise of:

- D1 15 community members (maximum).
- D2 Representatives will be selected by Council staff, on a merit basis, as a result of an Expression of Interest process. Council staff will seek to ensure a broad cross section of the community is represented through the selection process.
- D3 The CFG will be chaired by a member of Council staff and/or assigned representative on their behalf. Other staff members may participate in the discussion for the purposes of guidance but will not be members of the CFG.
- D4 Former Councillors or people intending to nominate for Council election shall not be members of the CFG, as it is intended to be a community focus group, not a political group. Members of state or federal government shall also not be members of the CFG.
- D5 The CFG is not a political group and solely to be used for community feedback and contributions towards the project and the Tuggerah Lakes Coastal Management Program.

E. RESPONSIBILITY OF MEMBERS

- E1 Review and provide timely feedback on aspects of the project or draft documents, as and when required.
- E2 Participate in workshops in a cooperative mutually respectful manner.
- E3 Contribute personal and the community's perspective to discussions.
- E4 Read pre-meeting materials, if applicable, to enable full participation in the meetings.



F. MEETING FORMATS

- F1 Meetings will be held at Central Coast Council's Wyong Administration Building. Meeting duration is two hours, from 6pm to 8pm, with light refreshments, tea and coffee provided. Meetings may change to online, pending the COVID-19 NSW Public Health Orders. Members will be notified if this occurs.

G. ATTENDANCE

- G1 The CFG meetings are not open to the public. Addressing or attending meetings by interested persons is at the discretion of the CFG Facilitator.
- G2 CFG members are expected to attend all meetings where possible.
- G3 Where a Member fails to attend two successive meetings without submitting a reasonable explanation, the Chairperson may replace or dismiss the member at their discretion.

H. FOCUS GROUP FACILITATOR

- H1 A CFG Facilitator shall be a staff member of Council and is responsible for co-ordinating the preparation of agendas, invitations, and minutes of the CFG.
- H2 The Facilitator shall also be responsible for co-ordinating the consultants and/or their representatives.

I. CHAIRPERSON

- I1 The Chairperson of the CFG will be a Council Unit Manager, or, in their absence, a delegated representative on their behalf.
- I2 The Chairperson shall determine the order of proceedings generally as set by the agenda.
- I3 In the absence of the Chairperson, the CFG Facilitator shall Chair the meeting.

J. VOTING

- J1 The CFG has a participatory role, its recommendations and suggestions will be taken into consideration during the course and in the context of the project but are not deemed to be a decision of Council.

K. QUORUM

- K1 The CFG does not require a quorum to hold a meeting.
- K2 The Chairperson shall use their discretion to determine if any item on the agenda should be deferred to a future meeting if it is considered there are insufficient members at the meeting.



L. MEETING SCHEDULE

- L1 The CFG shall meet on three occasions.
- L2 The CFG shall meet at times and dates determined by Council.
- L3 The CFG shall meet at Central Coast Council's Wyong Administration Building.

M. AGENDA

- M1 The Agenda shall be set by the CFG Facilitator.
- M2 The Agenda shall be distributed at least 5 days prior to the meeting.

N. COLLABORATION TOOLS

- N1 NSW Public Health Orders may require the need for meeting to be conducted remotely, using Microsoft Teams (MS Teams) or similar.
- N2 The CFG may use tools such as Mentimeter, Kahoot and MIRO to communicate, prompt discussion, explore ideas, brainstorm and capture ideas and feedback.

O. MINUTES AND REPORTING

- O1 Minutes will be taken for all meetings of the CFG.
- O2 Minutes of the meeting shall be recorded in Central Coast Council information management database.

P. SECRETARY

- P1 The administration of the CFG shall be undertaken by a Council staff member reporting to the CFG Facilitator.

Q. CODE OF CONDUCT

- Q1 All CFG Members are required to comply with Central Coast Council policies including the Code of Conduct. This includes compliance with confidentiality and appropriate behaviour. CFG members may be exposed to information which is confidential and/or privileged and proprietary in nature. Where this is the case, such information must be kept confidential both during and after volunteer service as a CFG member.

CFG members should also be aware that they are participating in a workplace environment and all other policies of Central Coast Council, such as workplace health and safety, and appropriate behaviour in the workplace, apply. Where staff direct members to follow policy requirements that direction shall be followed.



Q2 CFG members are expected to return materials containing privileged or confidential information at the time of cessation of the CFG.

Source document: **Code of conduct**
https://cdn.centralcoast.nsw.gov.au/sites/default/files/codeofconduct0_0.pdf

R. CESSATION OF ADVISORY GROUP

R1 The CFG shall cease to operate at the completion of the project.

