



# **Community Services – An Overview and Directions for the New Millennium**

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# 1. Introduction

At the start of the new millennium Australian society, like many other western countries is grappling with fundamental social, economic and environmental questions, which have a direct impact on Local Government.

After more than a decade of global reforms and major changes to domestic public policy, which is driven by economic rationalism we have seen many changes to our institutions, to our social relationships and to our living standards.

These challenges have made Councils more aware of the need to respond to community demands. In the past many services have been provided by other levels of governments, more recently new responsibilities have been devolved to Local Government with specific legislation requiring Councils to operate more efficiently. This has been on the main without extra funding to carry them, which also has put greater pressure into service provision due to the addition work load of major programs reviews and reforms.

The Kiama community has been very fortunate for the initiatives that this Council has undertaken in the development of Community Services. Council is recognised as a leader in innovation and service provision, especially for a Council of this size.

This paper provides an overview of Council's development of Community Services particularly over the last twenty years. It outlines the main issues affecting services today, with general information about directions for the future. It is not intended to be a major review as this is being carried out within each project and reported to Council in line with its Management Plan and Social Plan.

Some information and issues raised here have been included in previous reports to Council, but to date there has not been a broad report including information on all facets of Council's Community services programs in one document.

The main strength of this Municipality's good record in Community Services has been a supportive Council and progressive elected members who have had the vision to grasp new opportunities and respond to community demands. Also a dedicated and committed community services staff that throughout the years have been able to adapt to changes, accept many challenges and move forward; as well as a Council's management who have embraced the importance of this function in the overall Council's Corporate structure.

As we continue to move ahead it is important that Council is very aware of the challenges for the future and the directions which it wishes to take. Some will require Council's resources for Capital facilities or contribution to on going funding where no other subsidy is available for staff salaries. However, the main commitment will be to endorse expansion of its services in areas where Council has been very effective and competitive in successfully attracting funding for services in the region.

## 2. Development

Council has been involved in a number of community services initiatives for a number of years with Library Services in 1953, Home Nursing Services in 1969, Youth Training Program in 1978 and the opening of Blue Haven Retirement Village in 1979.

However, the first milestone towards a broader involvement by Council in Community Services was in 1981 when its first Community Worker was employed with a \$10,000 grant from the NSW Government. As a result of this position Council was presented with a comprehensive Community Profile with 43 recommendations for the involvement and development of Community Services in the Municipality.

After the completion of the Community Profile and resignation of the first Community Worker in 1984, Council employed a second Community Worker until 1986 when the position of Community Projects Officer was created with funding from the NSW Government, Area Assistance Scheme. Another position created in 1986 was that of Community Worker for the Aged also funded by the NSW Government. Then three more positions were funded under the Home and Community Care Program. A part-time Sitting Service Coordinator in 1986, a part-time Community Transport Coordinator in 1987 (both positions becoming full time in 1990) and a Community Options Coordinator in 1990.

The second milestone in Council's provision of Community Services was the creation of its Community Services Department in 1990 when the functions of Library Services, Home Nursing Services and Baby Health Services were transferred to the then newly created department to compliment other services already included in this function.

## 3. Social Planning

Following the creation of the position of Community Projects Officer in 1986 and later this role becoming part of a Social Planner/Community Services Coordinator's position, Council adopted a clearer direction for its involvement in this field through the development of its first Social Plan.

The first Social Plan was a document which evolved as part of broad consultation among Council's elected members, senior officers and the community between May and December 1987. It established the position which Council desired to take in the provision of Community Services and the main framework for a Policy which was going to allow further services provision.

The Social Plan was developed within the context of Kiama Council's history of involvement in the provision of Community Services. It also took into account the following factors impinging upon local government involvement in the field of Community Services:

- i) The demand for community services was likely to increase at a rate exceeding the capacity of local government to supply those services. Thus, economic constraints must be recognised.
- ii) There was a more concerted effort by community service providers in all levels of government and in non-government, to adopt a planned rather than ad-hoc approach to the delivery of community services.
- iii) Local Government in NSW through its Local Government and Shires Associations had given clear recognition for its involvement in community services, as stated in the Association Policy Statement of May 1986.

A Draft Social Plan was completed in December 1987; the document was made available to residents, community organisations and Government Departments for further comment for a period of three months. Council endorsed the final document in March 1988. As part of the Social plan, the role of Council in the development and provision of community services in the Municipality was to be two-fold; firstly a local role and secondly a regional role.

#### **Local Role**

Council's role of coordinator and catalyst of community services was to be expanded. While continuing in the roles of advocacy and development support, it was going to reduce its role as service provider in some areas to achieve greater community participation, community based and locally controlled services.

#### **Regional Role**

Council also recognised that it functions in a regional context and its role was to become actively involved in planning community services at a regional level.

Council was also to have a supportive role in assisting and promoting cooperation between all government departments and authorities whose decisions in community services affected both the local area and the Illawarra Region.

At that time Council was the first in the Region to develop a Social Plan and it was going to take another ten years until it become a NSW Government requirements for all Councils to prepare these plans as part of the Local Government (General) Amendment (Community and Social Plans) Regulation 1998.

The second major Social Plan was adopted by Council on 11 May 1999 and it is now reviewed each year as part of the Management Plan as required by the legislation.

## 4. Policy

As referred above, the first policy on Community Services was adopted by Council as part of its original Social Plan in 1988 then amended in 1990 and again in 1999.

The updated policy as adopted by Council and included in the Social/Community Plan is reproduced here again:

### **COMMUNITY SERVICES POLICY**

#### **MAIN AIM**

To enhance the quality of life, independence and well-being of residents of the Municipality; and to facilitate opportunities for members of the community to participate in the planning, development, provision and coordination of community services.

#### **1. Principles**

- 1.1 Council recognises that an effective social planning process in the provision of community services should aim at meeting the needs of all residents which is based on the principles of access, equity and social justice.
- 1.2 Council recognises the role of Local Government in maintaining the quality of life of the Community through the coordination and planning of Community Services; as well as acting as an advocate, catalyst and in providing development support for community based and locally controlled human services.
- 1.3 Council also recognises that it functions in a Regional context and as such it has a role of supporting, assisting and providing cooperation between all Government departments whose decisions on Community Services provision affect both the local area and the Illawarra Region.
- 1.4 Council further recognises that the demand for Community Services will increase at a rate exceeding the capacity of local government and community resources to supply those services, Thus economic constraints must be recognised.
- 1.5 Council will take into account these principles and the objectives outlined below in the implementation of programs to maximise the quality of life of its residents with particular reference to the residential environment and the most effective provision of Community Services and facilities.

## **2. Objectives**

- 2.1 To develop, implement and review a Social/Community Plan for the Municipality in accordance with Council's Community Services Policy and the Local Government Act.
- 2.2 To plan for an equitable distribution of Community Services and facilities throughout the Municipality with priority given to those sections of the community with greatest identified needs.
- 2.3 To promote coordination and sharing of resources in the Municipality in an effort to avoid unnecessary duplication and maximise efficient use of services and facilities.
- 2.4 To advocate on behalf of the local community to other levels of Government for funding and services provision.
- 2.5 To encourage provision of services and facilities, which are community based and locally controlled.
- 2.6 To ensure that Community Services programs are meeting community needs by implementing evaluation mechanisms for each program.
- 2.7 To provide development support to community organisations based on priority needs for the Municipality.
- 2.8 To participate in the provision of services where there is an established need and this has not been able to be met by other organisations.
- 2.9 To actively seek the participation in joint community services programs with other local governments in the region
- 2.10 To maximise the utilisation of State and Commonwealth Governments funding for the provision of different Community Services and facilities, by attracting funding to the Municipality and achieving cost-effective use of funds.
- 2.11 To encourage citizens participation and consultation on community programs, services and facilities.
- 2.12 To provide information to residents on Community Services and resources.
- 2.13 To promote and organise surveys, forums and research initiatives to assist in the identification of community needs and services.
- 2.14 To encourage multi-purpose use of public buildings and involvement of user groups in the management of these facilities.
- 2.15 To promote cooperation between social and physical planning.

- 2.16 To participate in local, regional and state planning forums and consultative processes which relates to the provision of services and facilities for the Municipality.
- 2.17 To encourage multi-cultural awareness and cross-cultural sensitivity in the Municipality.
- 2.18 To encourage an awareness and recognition of Aboriginal culture and heritage in the Municipality.
- 2.19 To develop innovative ventures to attract further funding to the Community and assist with the provision of services for the Municipality.
- 2.20 To tender for and become involved in the provision of community services in the region where Council expertise is assessed to be capable of providing such services and these can be self sustainable.

## 5. Services

The evolution of Community Services in Kiama has been a combination of various factors including legislative requirements with the provision of Library Services in 1953, community initiatives such as the Home Nursing Services which started as a voluntary concern in 1967 and then sponsored by Council in 1969. Later other services were initiated as a proposal from elected members and/or taking advantage of other levels of government funding availability.

Today Community Services are provided as part of Council Corporate Goals and Principal Activities included in the Management Plan and more clearly defined in the strategies developed in the Social /Community Plan in order that Council may fulfil the general responsibility for enhancing the quality of life of its citizens.

In this context some services have been initially provided by Council and then handed over to community based organisations and others expanded in response to identified needs and demands. Some services now are provided across other Local Government areas, some six days a week (Library), others seven days a week (Community Nursing and Youth Services) or on demand seven days a week 24 hours a day (Brokerage Nursing Service).

### 5.1 *Children's Services*

Provision of Children's Services and Coordination was originally the responsibility of the Community Projects Officer who provided assistance with the development and establishments of child care facilities in the Municipality. In 1990 the position of Children's Services Officer to cover Shellharbour and Kiama Local Government Areas was created as a joint venture and funded by the Area Assistance scheme. Recurrent funding is now provided by the NSW Department of Community Services and administered by Shellharbour Council.

The original purpose of the position was to assist the community to acquire more childcare. The Federal Government at the time was offering funds to establish community based children's services, Shellharbour and Kiama were not well supplied especially in the area of care for children under 2 years old and work related long day care.

In the last ten years the supply of childcare by both the for-profit and the community-based sector has improved dramatically. Council now has a policy document that is available to all potential developers of childcare facilities to ensure they are fully aware of the requirements of both Council and the Department of Community Services (DOCS) when building or renovating. Regular surveys of the community and network meetings with service providers ensure that information is available to advise prospective developers and other government agencies of the local needs.

The only direct childcare service offered by Kiama Council was the Vacation Care program. In 1999 a successful submission by Shellharbour/Kiama Family Day Care Inc resulted in the Commonwealth Government funding an After School Care and Vacation Care program in Central Kiama. Council agreed to hand over sponsorship of their Vacation Care to provide a year round service under one sponsor. The Children's Services Manager still has a role on the management committee of Family Day Care and provides professional support and resourcing.

Now that the need for new services is no longer the priority the role of Council has changed to reflect changes in the childcare industry and changes in the direction of the funding body DOCS. There is more emphasis on providing support through publications and phone enquires keeping services and families up to date on various children's services issues and developing new directions for childcare. Recently the community in Gerringong was assisted to identify possible solutions for their after school care needs.

A major emphasis for DOCS is in the area of early intervention. One aspect of this is Parent Support and Education. The Children's Services Manager convenes a regular inter-agency meeting, every 6 weeks, for representatives from many different agencies, government departments and charities, who either provide or have clients who need Parenting Services. This network has grown and become more Illawarra focused as everyone enjoys the benefits of sharing information and gaining better knowledge of services available in the area.

Parent Education also involves many aspects of the Kiama Safe Community project and some very successful initiatives have come out of that partnership, notably a Teddy Bears Picnic that attracted about 200 parents and children to a day of fun and games and a Safety Expo in Hindmarsh Park.

On behalf of Council the Children's Services Manager is involved with;

- ◆ The National Association of Community Based Children's Services (NACBCS)
- ◆ Child Injury Prevention Task Force of Healthy Cities Illawarra
- ◆ The advisory committee of the Parents as Teachers program
- ◆ The management committee (public officer) of Shellharbour/Kiama Family Day Care
- ◆ Parenting Services Inter-agency
- ◆ DOCS Child Protection Reference Group
- ◆ Children's Services in the Illawarra Regional Training Group
- ◆ Local Government Children's Services Division
- ◆ National Association for the Prevention of Child Abuse and Neglect (NAPCAN)

Council has shifted its emphasis in the Children's Services field in line with its original Social Planning role and will continue to provide support and Coordination but not direct involvement in service provision.

## **5.2 Youth Services**

The first step of Council in becoming involved in this field can be traced back to 1978 when it took advantage of the NSW Youth Training Program and then in 1982 the first survey was carried out as part of the preparation of the Community Profile which sought information from young people on their involvement and interest in provision recreation facilities.

In 1985 as part of the International Youth Year, Council resolved to establish the Kiama Young Citizens' Council adopting a Constitution and meeting procedure. However, it wasn't until 1993 when with a subsidy for two years from the Area Assistance Scheme, Council employed the first Youth Worker. In 1995 Council took up the funding for this position and then in 1997 again the Area Assistance Scheme funded a second part-time Youth Worker, which now receive on going funding from the NSW Department of Community Services.

The success of youth services in the Kiama area has relied on the involvement and participation of young people in programs that have a positive impact on the community. Outcomes for young people included their planning and design of the Skateboard Park and fund raising activities for the facility. They have had input into the planning of activities for social skill development and recreation at The Cottage, the Kiama Youth Resource Centre, which in turn have been implemented in the wider community.

The school holiday program has contained programs specially designed to have community development outcomes. Self-Defence for Young Women targeted young women and looked at empowering them with strategies to deal with potentially violent situations. The young women who have attended have been able to take their knowledge out into the community.

Some issues, which are still prevalent in the KIAMA LGA, are the lack of employment opportunities for young people, especially those who have left school early. The Youth Cottage, to try and counteract this issue, has a job folder featuring the latest available jobs. They also have access to assistance with preparing resumes and job interview techniques. There has also been 2 young people employed through the Cottage to tutor programs amongst their peers. These 2 young people are now utilising skills learned at the Youth Centre, to further their careers.

Volunteers are a priority for Council Youth Services in the future. Council is now registered with Volunteering Illawarra who source appropriate volunteers. Police and TAFE placements are also encouraged and student placements are now part of the Youth Program.

Sourcing revenue through various funding bodies including NSW Ministry of the Arts, Festivals Australia and Artsinfo is also a key area. As all age, alcohol and drug free entertainment options are becoming more in demand, securing funding to run entertainment events becomes a high priority. This also provides extra income being brought into the youth services budget.

Future plans for the Youth Program include developing youth outreach programs in Gerringong and Jamberoo. These programs will be looking at addressing key issues for young people living in these areas, including school holiday programs, workshops and entertainment events. Also linking these young people to employment and education options will be a priority.

New directions also include more joint programs with youth services in the Illawarra including North Kiama Neighbourhood Centre, Ethnic Communities Council and accommodation and health services. The formation of a Kiama Youth Interagency will be one strategy to address this.

The Youth Advisory Committee of Council is currently a good model for youth consultation and participation and has a core group of young people who attend. New challenges for the Youth Advisory Committee will be to encourage more young people to become involved especially those from Gerringong, Kiama Downs and Jamberoo. A marketing push to students at Kiama High School will be also a priority. Community Arts has become a part of youth activities, with Sparx and the Skatepark mural involving young people from the Youth Centre.

### ***5.3 Cultural Development***

For many years Kiama has been the source of a very rich and varied artistic community, a cultural haven attracting people to enjoy the environmental beauty and unique heritage sites of the area.

The large number of cultural organisations and events has been a tradition to the Kiama area extending to the whole region and other parts of NSW.

Similar to the establishment of the Children's Services Officer's position, a Community Arts Officer was appointed in 1990 by Kiama Council as a joint venture with Shellharbour Council and initially funded for two years by the Illawarra Area Assistance Scheme. In

1992 the NSW Ministry for the Arts funded the position at an annual subsidy of around \$40,000 until 2000 when the funding was suspended and then again in 2001 re-established at a lesser level of subsidy of \$25,000 per annum.

The focus of the position was changed from that of Community Arts to Cultural Development in August 1995 to reflect a broader function involving facilitation, resourcing, communication and understanding of cultural resources and activities.

In a report to Council in July 2000 as part of a review of the Cultural Development Officer's position the success of this program was highlighted including strong links with the community through a consultation process and included the following activities:

#### Cultural Activities

Festivals, going to the library, film, tourism, painting, community art projects, art workshops, sport, celebrating traditions within different cultures, consultation, participation, healthy lifestyles, recreation and enjoyment, creativity, learning new skills, forming cross cultural links (young and older people working together on community art projects), are all cultural activities happening in Kiama today.

#### New Developments

Lantern Parade Seaside Festival

Sparx Magazine – A working partnership with Kiama Youth, Business, Cultural

Gerringong Pics and Flicks – Establish local screen culture

Kiama Crisis Resourcing Project

Spanish Fiesta Jamberoo

Kiama Art and Craft Trail

#### Annual Events

Australia Day Celebrations

Seaside Festival

Jazz Festival

Youth Week Celebrations

Carnivalé Festival

Artsmart Program

Artstart Program

Future directions include the development of a Kiama Cultural Board to assist Council in consultation with the community to make decisions and planning relating to the cultural activity and cultural tourism in the Municipality.

The Board will also have a role in attracting funding from other sources and government agencies towards specific projects.

## 5.4 *Library Services*

Since the establishment of Kiama Library service in 1953, the issue of the library buildings and resources has been a constant consideration by Council. Particularly when the subsidy from the NSW government has been diminishing in real terms throughout the years, at present being subsidised at a level of 8.98% of the overall cost of providing this service.

During the second half of 2000, Kiama Council was fortunate to be chosen as one of ten Councils to participate in a series of workshops conducted by consultants at the State Library of New South Wales, on Strategic positioning of Public Libraries. At different sessions, the Director of Community Services, Mario M Vallejos, and Deputy Mayor Cllr. Les Davey accompanied the Librarian, Bobbie Miller, to the workshops.

A Draft Strategic Plan was prepared as a result of the workshops, which is attached at the end of this report.

The overwhelming resource requirements for the library are additional building space, and additional staff time, particularly for specialist staff. In addition, technology requirements must be continuously updated, and resources continued to be provided for loan and reference in a wide variety of formats. The needs of the Gerringong community as it continues to grow, also merit consideration.

### 5.4.1 *Additional Building Space*

The State Library of New South Wales has recently published "People Places: a guide for public library buildings in Australia". It provides a detailed description of the planning process, for all those involved in a new library building, an extension, or the remodelling of an existing building. It contains a wealth of practical advice on assessing the needs of local communities, as well as guidelines on the space needed to meet those needs.

In the existing library building, staff and public are continuously aware of the need for more space: more space for the collections, more space for computers, more space for quiet places to study, more space to sit and read newspapers and magazines, more space for children and youth, more space for displays, toilets, and for staff work area.

Area of existing building	460sq m
Area recommended by "People places" for population of 19,000-approx.	800sq m

It is recommended that a study to determine the needs for a larger building, and the feasibility of developing the existing site be undertaken as a matter of urgency. Council might need to allow funding for extending the Library in future budgeting as well as seeking contribution from the State Library Capital Facilities Grant.

#### 5.4.2 *Staff*

Kiama Library staff is extremely busy with ever-increasing demands placed on them by the public, particularly in relation to technology. The library has excellent Reference, Technology, Circulation and a Home Library service, which is undertaken by the Manager or volunteers. The development of the Local History collection, to which very little staff time can be given, needs to be undertaken by a Local Studies Librarian.

- The 1998/99 Public Libraries Statistics Report shows Kiama as the tenth busiest in the State, with each staff member issuing 33,456 items per annum. The NSW median is 20,273.
- The ratio of population per staff member in Kiama is 3,999, whereas the median for the State is 3,080. Mudgee, for example, has 1,489 population per staff member, and Mosman, 1,529.
- The ratio of population per qualified staff member for Kiama is 18,794, the ninth highest in NSW. The State median is 7,869.

#### 5.4.3 *Gerringong*

Gerringong Branch is currently open 6 hours per week. As no member of permanent staff has the time to serve the branch every week, the duties are rotated. This means the service lacks continuity. The building space is also very small, and the level of technology provided is low.

It is recommended that consideration be given, as Gerringong's population increases, to increasing the hours at Gerringong, appointing branch staff, and to finding a new location, possibly in conjunction with other community services as a multi function service point.

### 5.5 *Community Support and Development*

Community Support Services is now the largest section in Community Services and are the main projects provided from the Kiama Community Centre in Hindmarsh Park.

For many years Kiama Council have adopted the role of a provider of community support services. As mentioned above in 1969 Council funded a home nursing service, which was developed on a voluntary basis in 1967. This service is still operational today as Kiama Council's Community Nursing Service and provides appropriate medical assistance to people in their own homes.

In 1985 the Commonwealth and State Governments introduced the Home and Community Care Program (HACC). The aim of this program is to provide a comprehensive and integrated range of basic support services for frail aged, younger people with a disability and their carers.

Under this program Council have successfully obtained funds for a Community Respite Program, Community Transport Program, part funding for their Community Nursing Service, and in 1990 funding for a Community Options Program which services consumers in the Kiama and Shellharbour Local Government Areas (LGA's).

In 1998 Council applied for and was successful in obtaining funding from the Commonwealth Government for 50 Community Aged Care Packages (CACP'S) across the Kiama, Shellharbour and Wollongong LGA's. Due to the successful administration of these packages Council was awarded a further 30 packages in 2001.

### ***5.5.1 Program Types***

Kiama Council's Community Support Services provide five discrete program types from the Kiama Community Centre in Hindmarsh Park. These projects have a well-developed infrastructure and solid reputation in the wider service system. They are multi-disciplinary in nature and provide services to consumers in the Kiama, Shellharbour and Wollongong LGA's.

These services provide a seamless single entry point for consumers of low to high needs. Consumers are able to access services with minimal intrusion, a single assessment process and in many occasions continuity of direct caseworkers.

#### ***Community Transport.***

The Community Transport Service provides transport for medical appointments, day care transport, a shopping run, and group outings. Volunteers who are recruited and trained by the project coordinator provide all driving and assistance on the buses/car. The project currently averages over 1,000 passenger trips a month.

Recently the project has been actively involved in a twelve-month pilot aimed at improving access for consumers to health services in the Illawarra. The pilot titled "Health Related Transport in the Illawarra" has involved a collaborative approach by Kiama Council, Wollongong City Council, Dapto Neighbourhood Centre and the Illawarra Health Service (IAHS). Under the pilot Kiama Council Community Transport have been providing not less than 3 return journeys per day between Kiama and Wollongong. LGA's. The pilot has been so successful the IAHS have extended funding for a further 12 months.

#### ***Community Nursing.***

Council has contributed funding to the Community Nursing Service since 1969. In 1997 the nursing service expanded to include an additional type of service delivery and today Kiama is the only Council which continues to be involved directly in providing Community Nursing Services in NSW using a brokerage (contracting) model. To achieve this the nursing service has employed a casual pool of 47 nurses. Agencies broker these nurses from Council's Nursing Service to provide nursing and social support services for their consumers.

These staff are recruited, trained and supported by Kiama Council and provide services across the Kiama, Shellharbour and Wollongong LGA's, with potential to also cover Shoalhaven. All services brokered by other agencies are based on a fee for service and the income generated from this form of service delivery, forms part of Council's contribution to the Community Nursing Service.

In a short period of time Council's Brokerage Nursing Service has been recognised for providing a quality nursing service and having staff that possess a diverse range of skills and qualifications. The Brokerage Nursing Service currently averages 80 clients a month and provides over 1,000 hours of service per month. It is contracted by no less than ten community organisations across the Illawarra.

***Community Respite.***

The Community Respite Project assists consumers who are socially isolated in the community and carers who require a break from their caring role. Volunteers who are recruited, trained and supported by the project coordinator conduct all respite duties. The project provides service to 40 clients in the Kiama LGA and averages 152 hours of service per month. A lack of services for younger people with a disability in the Kiama LGA has resulted in the coordinator developing a bowling league and peer support for this target group.

***Community Options.***

The Community Options Project provides a case management service to 40 consumers across the Kiama and Shellharbour LGA's. These consumers have complex care needs and are not able to coordinate services independently. The Community Options Project operates on a brokerage model of service delivery and currently brokers (or purchase) approx. 340 hours of service per month for their consumers.

***Community Aged Care Packages (CACP'S).***

The Community Aged Care Packages Project commenced in 1998 when Council received funding for 50 CACP's across the Kiama, Shellharbour and Wollongong LGA's. The project had gained a solid reputation for offering a model of best practice in this type of service provision across the Illawarra. This was evident when Council received further funding for an additional 30 CACP's earlier this year and thus becoming the largest provider of CACP's in the region.

CACP's provide low-level hostel care to people who wish to remain at home and not enter a residential facility. In an annual "Statement of Income and Expenditure of CACP's" released in July 2000 by the Commonwealth, it was revealed that Council's CACP project expends 87.5% of its funding on direct care for consumers. This is above the NSW state average of 76%.

***5.5.2 Government Reforms.***

In recent years governments have embarked on a series of reform within the community support service sector.

Staff of Kiama Council's Community Support Services has been instrumental in initiating and facilitating service development activities in the region.

***i) Common Information & Referral Record (CIARR)***

Staff of the Community Support Services was instrumental in the development of protocols and procedures for the implementation of the Client Information & Referral Record (CIARR). These protocols are acknowledgment as one of the first developed in the State.

Kiama Council Community Support Services actively provided the protocols as a model of best practice in the region and assisted other areas in this aspect of reform. This was completed in 1997 prior to the mandatory use of the CIARR. The contribution Kiama has made to the State development is reflected in the HACC reform manual as much of the documentation mirrors what was developed in the Kiama area.

*ii) Abuse of the Elderly*

Kiama Community Support Services also introduced the development of “Abuse of the Elderly” in the Kiama and Shellharbour LGA’s. These protocols are used by community services across Kiama and Shellharbour and act as a useful guide in the area of abuse.

*iii) Best Practice in Brokerage*

Staff of the Kiama Community Support Services has worked closely with other services in the region to develop a comprehensive and innovative guide for providers who broker or sub-contract service provision. This guide documents the minimum standards expected of service providers when care for consumers are being provided using brokerage funds.

Staff of Kiama Community Support Services believes that the process and resultant documentation have enhanced collaborative working arrangements between providers and facilitated a shared understanding of the minimum standards expected of service providers.

*iv) Comprehensive Assessment*

More recently staff of Kiama Community Support Services have been working with representatives in the Illawarra to develop protocols that will be used in the process of comprehensive assessment in the community. Services in the Illawarra are again leading the way in this reform and their progress is being monitored at a State level.

*v) Self Assessment – Validation*

Three of Councils Community Support Services have recently taken part in a pilot conducted by State Government. This pilot involved a self-assessment validation process against the HACC National Standards using a National Standards Monitoring Instrument. The outcome of the pilot demonstrated that the three services, Community Transport, Community Respite and Community Options all met the standards at a high level.

*vi) Coordinated Care Trial*

Staff of Kiama Council Community Support Services has played an instrumental role in the regional initiatives and decision to apply for funding for a further Commonwealth Coordinated Care Trial. The Manager of Council’s Community Support Services is a representative on the Illawarra Coordinated Care Steering Committee and a Kiama Council Community Support Project coordinator acted as the Coordinated Care Trial Design Phase Coordinator. Involvement in this initiative reflects the knowledge staff at Kiama Council’s Community Support Services has of the existing service system its constraints and opportunities for improved outcomes for consumers.

*vii) Conferences and Workshops*

Staff of Kiama Council’s Community Support Services has taken such an active role in the reform process; they have been invited to present papers, in relation to these reforms, at both State and National Conferences & Workshops. In March 2001 the Manager of Kiama Community Support Services will present a paper to government representatives regarding Comprehensive Assessment in Community Care. This has resulted from services in the Illawarra having a pro-active role in this reform.

### **5.5.3 Comparative Indicators**

A recently released report titled “Comparative Information on NSW Local Government Councils 1998 – 99 has noted Kiama Council with its expenditure being the 7<sup>th</sup> highest on community services in the State. Community Service expenditure per capita from Kiama Council was \$233.69 a 19.8% increase from the previous year. This is substantially more than expenditure by neighbouring councils:

Shellharbour - \$26.19 per capita  
 Shoalhaven - \$20.42 per capita  
 Wollongong - \$22.58 per capita

Even with the exclusion of Blue Haven’s outlays, Council exceeds \$100.00 Community Services expenditure per capita.

Kiama Council Community Support Services have a solid reputation in the delivery of support services across the Illawarra. They are held in high regard by other service providers and community agencies.

Kiama Community Support Services consistently demonstrate initiative, creativity and innovation in service delivery and models for service delivery management. Through keeping informed and abreast of the changes resulting from the wider reform agenda for the delivery of support service, Council’s Community Support Services have adopted a pro-active approach choosing to experience growth and expansion as a result of these changes. Kiama Council Community Support staff are frequently requested to present their ideas and models for service delivery to other service providers and forums.

Kiama Council Community Support Services have the ability to grow substantially and through this growth expand their ability to provide a regional single point of entry into a variety of services and program types across the Illawarra. It is this model of service delivery that provides consumers with access to a wide range of services with minimal intrusion on their quality of life.

In order to achieve this Kiama Councils Community Services will require additional space at the Community Centre. This could be achieved by temporarily occupying a proportion of the auditorium for office space. A section of the auditorium would be maintained as a meeting/training area.

Community groups that currently book the auditorium for activities will be consulted and assisted in acquiring suitable accommodation in other appropriate facilities throughout the local government area.

## 6. Economic Benefits and Social Capital

The importance of economic growth in the Australian Government implementation of structural reforms has been one of the main directions in their policies of economic rationalism.

Many of these reforms which affect Local Government involve new funding directions which require greater accountability and measure how effective programs are in relation to money spent or allocated. In other words measuring outputs and outcomes with greater emphasis on unit costs.

These reforms have been very significant in Community Services programs, as mentioned in section 5.5.2 and initially there was great resistance within the community sector. They were considered too limiting and driven only by economic measures ignoring the importance to social indicators and the well being of individuals.

However, Council's Community Services not only accepted these challenges, it has taken advantage of them in re-defining its traditional local role with a more regional emphasis.

It is very pleasing that by embracing these reforms and becoming more involved in Community Support Services, Council has been able to fill a vacuum left in other Local Government areas. Council's Community Support Services successfully adopted National Standards resulting in them being recognised as a model of best practice in the region.

Moreover, the economic benefits to the local community and the region have been very significant in employment creation and the actual injection of funds into the local and regional economy.

The major growth in employment over recent years have been in the Community Support Section with projects such as CACP's and Community Options attracting 100% funding, and the Brokerage Nursing Service which is self sufficient.

At present the Community Services Department employs 16 full time staff and 7 part-time people with an extra 60 casual positions of which the majority (47) are employed in the new Brokerage Nursing Service.

The Community Services expenditure has been growing every year and also the contribution from funding grants and other sources.

However, the main contribution of Community Services is the investment in Social Capital.

At the last December 2000 National Assembly of Local Government in Canberra in an address by the Member for Werriwa Mr Mark Latham MP he said that *“for most Australians the burning issues of our time are not necessarily economic; they are intensely social”*... *“This is one of the paradoxes of our time: the growing number of people who are materially rich yet socially poor. While Australia has been experiencing record rates of GDP, we have been suffering from record rates of loneliness, family breakdown, street crime and community disengagement”*.

Community Services policies and programs have been developed to enhance the quality of life of residents, encouraging partnerships, social interaction and above all building a more civil society. Social Capital is commonly regarded as comprising all those features of social organisations, such as networks, norms and social trust that facilitate coordination and cooperation for mutual benefit of individuals and their communities.

Community Services programs, particularly within the Community Support Section, Youth Services and Library Services rely heavily on over 100 volunteers who not only assist in the actual delivery of services but also contribute directly to an integral part in achieving greater social interaction.

Research (Social Capital and Public Policy in Australia, Australian Institute of Family Studies, 2000) have found that volunteers are more involved in a range of activities in addition to their volunteering and thus contributing to stock of Social Capital.

The value of volunteering is not only to those in need of assistance but also to the building of community life in general.

A recent study on Libraries and Social Capital (Public Libraries Branch of NSW State Library 2000) found that the production of Social Capital in libraries could be correlated with ways in which diverse needs are accommodated.

This includes the ability to provide shared space for diverse groups. It also includes the Library’s ability to facilitate conflict resolution, a demonstration of the respect for other needs, an adherence to rules with minimal policing and other indicators of socially responsible behaviour.

The development of Council’s Community Services programs and policies have been based on a strong commitment to social justice and assistance with skills for greater civil participation.

Therefore, the greater social benefits and investment of Council in Community Services are better measured by its accumulation of Social Capital rather than economic benefits alone.

Social Capital is what the social philosopher Albert O. Hirschman calls a *“moral resource”*, that is, a resource whose supply increases rather than decreases through use and which (unlike physical capital) becomes depleted if not used.

## 7. Conclusions

The involvement of Council in Community Services has been marked by an excellent record to the commitment in the planning, development and provisions of this important function, which has placed it as a leader in this field.

For the last two decades the growth and diversity of Council's Community Services programs have provided not only a great economic benefit but also a contribution to the Social Capital of the Municipality. Its Social Plans and Policies have been instrumental in achieving initially an important role within the immediate local community and in recent years within the region by taking advantages of funding priorities as part of State and Commonwealth Governments reforms.

For the future, as part of its Management Plan, Social Plan and budget deliberations, Council will need to regularly monitor the level of commitment to different programs based on grant subsidies provided, the capacity of the program to generate its own resources and Council's own economic circumstances.

Programs which attract full funding and provide greater service to the community should receive greater support from Council in line with its Community Services Policy.

As outlined in this paper and the Kiama Municipal Library Draft Strategic Plan, the library building is one of the main priorities for consideration by Council and the options are to expand the existing library building or investigate other alternatives sites which can have a broader benefit to the Council.

In regard to Council's Community Support Services, there needs to be consideration into the continual growth of these services. To date Council have maintained a solid reputation in the delivery of Community Support Services across the Illawarra. Council's support services are regarded as leaders in their field and are held in high regard by Government departments, service providers and consumers.

If Council's support services continue to expand it is imperative they maintain their current service model, which is a regional single point of entry. It is this model that provides consumers with access to a wide range of services with minimal intrusion on their quality of life. It is also the model which Governments have promoted in the reform process and will not be able to be as effective if programs are fragmented.

## 8. Recommendations

- 8.1 That Council support expansion of Community Services in areas that attract full funding and can include in budget submissions a contribution towards the overall administration of these projects.
- 8.2 Council endorse the Kiama Library Draft Strategic Plan and consider in its Budget Estimates funding allocations for further resources.
- 8.3 That Council seek a further report on alternative options and funding for the expansion of the Library building to at least the recommended floor space for the present population.
- 8.4 That Council initiate negotiation with existing user groups of the Kiama Community Centre towards alternative accommodation to allow expansion of Community Support services and allocates part of the auditorium for office space.

# **Kiama Municipal Library**

## **Draft Strategic Plan 2001 - 2005**