



Kiama Council
Community Engagement Strategy



KIAMA
MUNICIPAL
COUNCIL

Community vision

Working together for a healthy, sustainable and caring community.

Council mission

Kiama Council will work to create a municipality that has a healthy, vibrant lifestyle, beautiful environment and harmonious, **connected** and resilient community.

Kiama Council *Community Strategic Plan 2013-23:*

Strategy 4.5

Foster positive relationships with our community through open communications, opportunities for participation in decision making and sharing of information.

NSW Government's *NSW 2021—A plan to make NSW number one*

Goal 31

Improve government transparency by increasing access to government information.

Goal 32

Involve the community in decision making on government policy, services and projects.

Better engagement | Better outcomes

Kiama Council makes decisions on behalf of the community. These decisions are made for today and for our municipality's future and are based on our Community Vision to work "together for a healthy, sustainable and caring community".

Great decisions are made through purposeful engagement.

A community that is involved in our decision-making process and well-informed of what we're doing achieves better outcomes for everyone.

As a professional, forward-thinking organisation we are going to be proactive, open and transparent in engaging our community.

This strategy provides the framework for how we will conduct community engagement.

Community Engagement golden rules

To have effective decision-making, community engagement should:

- be visible, open and transparent
- encourage feedback from, and provide feedback to, participants and the wider community
- encourage communication between groups so that individuals and groups can better understand each other and the challenges facing Council; and to maximise working relationships
- provide a clear record and obvious link or evaluation between the stages of engagement; consultation, decisions made, and projects/activities taking place
- be used to collect representative views as well as stakeholders views
- use a coordinated, well-planned approach
- use clear and concise messages
- use communication methods that appropriately target the audience/recipient(s)
- monitor and evaluate communication methods
- be consistent with corporate branding
- be proactive
- be timely.

Leading the way

Key results from our most recent survey of Kiama Municipal residents revealed the following:

HIGHER IMPORTANCE LOWER SATISFACTION	HIGHER IMPORTANCE HIGHER SATISFACTION
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Maintenance of local roads • Encouraging local businesses and jobs • Provision of public toilets • Maintenance of public toilets • Services and facilities for youth • Services and facilities for children • Consulting the community • Council responsiveness to community needs • Provision of public car parking in your town centre 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cleanup of street litter and dumped rubbish • Maintenance of sports grounds and playing fields • Maintenance of parks and gardens • Garbage collection • Kerbside recycling service • Biannual clean up services • Green waste service • Library services • Overall range and quality of community facilities • Maintenance and cleanliness of rock pools and beaches • Beach lifeguard service
LOWER IMPORTANCE LOWER SATISFACTION	LOWER IMPORTANCE HIGHER SATISFACTION
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provision of footpaths • Maintenance of footpaths • Provision of bike paths • Maintenance of bike paths • Information on Council services and activities 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provision of sports grounds and playing fields • Provision of parks and gardens • Leisure Centre • Provision of children's playgrounds and equipment • Services and facilities for older people • Provision of community halls and community centres

We have an opportunity to achieve 'Higher importance | Higher satisfaction' for all of these key services and facilities.

Our goal is to become a leader in local government community engagement by:

- **ensuring** all groups in the community are given opportunities to engage with Council and participate in the decision-making process
- **fostering** a Council-wide culture of community engagement
- **staying ahead** of emerging new communication platforms that benefit us and our community
- **embracing** all forms of feedback, positive and negative, and the opportunities it provides to build a positive, professional reputation
- **increasing** information sharing with residents by capturing their preferred method of contact whenever possible; during a conversation, by using feedback forms at an event; and encouraging sign up to our electronic newsletters and social media accounts.
- **offering** improved access to Council officials and ensuring Council is approachable.

Roles and responsibilities

Councillors make decisions on behalf of the community. They therefore play a significant role in directing, leading and encouraging community engagement. The decisions Councillors make are put into practice by Council officers.

Council officers have a key role in developing and delivering effective community engagement opportunities on matters affecting the local government area. Council officers work to provide information, facts and advice to Councillors to ensure they are well-informed to make appropriate decisions. They are also responsible for ensuring that engagement techniques, materials and assessments are undertaken in accordance with this strategy.

Community members are the major stakeholders in community engagement. They are encouraged to willingly participate in the community engagement activities that interest and/or affect them. Community members should recognise that community engagement means participating in two-way dialogue that is respectful to other community members while being conscious that participation does not guarantee an outcome to which everyone will agree.

Target audiences

Our community includes:

- residents
- ratepayers
- landowners
- business operators
- people who live outside but work in the municipality
- visitors/tourists to the Kiama area
- users of Council services
- Council's advisory committees
- local, regional, resident and neighbourhood associations
- business associations including chambers of commerce
- media
- community and volunteer service providers
- government agencies and statutory bodies
- current and future employees
- older residents
- children and youth
- families
- people with a disability or those who are marginalised (and their carers)
- culturally and linguistically diverse communities.

Our engagement opportunities

Media

Delivery Plan Action 4.5.2

Distribute media releases on Council decisions, projects, plans and activities

Activities: liaise with media; plan for and manage media issues

Related policy: Communications Procedure

Online

Delivery Plan Action 4.5.1

Provide innovative and engaging digital and social media solutions for our community

Activities: provide up-to-date Council website, Kiama Connect website, and social media platforms that are well-utilised by the community

Related policy: Social Media Policy, Communications Procedure, Style Guide

Branding

Delivery Plan Action 4.5.3

Promote a consistent and positive image of Council to the community

Activities: use professional graphic design services, manage branding and style guide, coordinate corporate advertising

Related policy: Style Guide

Community Relations

Delivery Plan Action 4.5.4

Provide opportunities for inclusive community engagement in decision making, recognising social justice and cultural diversity as integral components

Delivery Plan Action 4.5.6

Ensure new residents are informed and welcomed to the Kiama Municipality

Activities: implement Community Engagement Strategy, offer innovative and inclusive engagement opportunities

Related policy: Community Engagement Strategy

Strategic Partnerships

Delivery Plan Action 4.8.1

Participate in partnerships and alliances to promote policy development and efficient sharing of resources

Activities: identify, encourage and build working partnerships with relevant stakeholders and other government agencies.

Related policy: Procurement Policy and Procedure, Code of Conduct

Types of matters

Use the below table to guide you in your consultation methods. The methods recommended depend on the type of issue or matter you are managing. They can be:

Event/activity: A community event, such as outdoor movie screenings or a busking competition.

Site specific: Matters about a particular site, such as a change in use or Development Application, planning proposal or rezoning.

Locality improvement: Matters that affect people in a town, suburb, neighbourhood or CBD area such as traffic management, road works, track or beach closures.

Service and program planning: Development, improvement, or change to a service. The service is likely to have an impact on community members across the whole municipality such as Youth Centre operating hours, school holiday activities, learn to swim classes, CCTV network installation.

Policy and planning development: To create or improve policies for Council's position on particular matters. Policies may affect the whole municipality such as a Surf School policy, Fitness Groups public park use policy, or Plans of Management.

Major projects/strategic issues/resource plans: Projects that will impact on the finances or future of the municipality such as Kiama Harbour masterplan, Kiama Hospital redevelopment, Development Control Plans, Resourcing Strategy, Long Term Financial Plan.

Integrated plans: Major planning documents used to guide Council's priorities and activities such as Community Strategic Plan (CSP), Delivery Program (DP) and Operational Plan (OP).

Please note: Council's Integrated Plans (in particular the CSP) and major projects/strategic plans have a significant impact on our community.

The development of these major plans and projects requires a process of engagement that goes above and beyond that normally expected for any other issue or matter which Council is considering or proposing.

These types of projects or plans have several stages of progress, shown in the International Association of Public Participation Spectrum below.

Council Officers need to create an initial project management plan which outlines how the community will be engaged at each stage.

	Inform	Consult	Involve	Collaborate	Empower
Public participation goal	To provide the public with balanced and objective information to assist them in understanding the problem, alternatives, opportunities and/or solutions.	To obtain public feedback on analysis, alternatives and/or decisions.	To work directly with the public throughout the process to ensure that public concerns and aspirations are consistently understood and considered.	To partner with the public in each aspect of the decision including the development of alternatives and the identification of the preferred solution.	To place final decision making in the hands of the public.

Promise to the public	We will keep you informed	We will keep you informed, listen to and acknowledge concerns and aspirations, and provide feedback on how public input influenced the decision. We will seek your feedback on drafts and proposals.	We will work with you to ensure that your concerns and aspirations are directly reflected in the alternatives developed and provide feedback on how public input influenced the decision.	We will work together with you to formulate solutions and incorporate your advice and recommendations into the decisions to the maximum extent possible.	We will implement what you decide.
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For example, a community engagement strategy for a major redevelopment project requires us to plan what community engagement methods we will use during each of the following stages:

- initial concept design and planning
- DA lodgement and public exhibition period
- council deliberation/approval/rejection/amendment
- building, construction and occupation
- operation/opening.

Ways we can engage

Share information

Letter/email/sms: Written communication addressed to affected parties using official Council letterhead, online branding and multimedia sign off. It outlines the matter/issue, invites comment and states where comment should be directed within Council.

Letterbox drop: Non-addressed flyer/letter to outline the matter/issue and invite feedback to Council. It must use either Council letterhead or contain Council's logo (refer to our Style Guide TRIM 14/46769) and a method for recipients to provide feedback such as Council's email, phone number or website address linking to the relevant page.

Council newsletters: **Kimunico**

- 8,500 copies distributed to ratepayers with rates notices in mid-January, mid-April, mid-July, mid-October
- 1,000 distributed across Council buildings; Kiama Library, Family History Centre, Community Centre, Leisure Centre, Administration Centre
- available on Council's website
- Content deadlines: minimum 9 weeks prior to distribution date

Contains articles about events, policies, issues, programs and services and can be used to report on results of community engagement projects. When used for consultation, the article must encourage feedback and provide information on how to do so.

e-newsletters

- E-newsletters available:
 - Sustainability newsletter (286 subscribers)
 - Business news and events (403 subscribers)
 - Food safety news (289 subscribers)
 - Kimunico (81 subscribers | posted on social media)
 - Leisure Centre news (743 subscribers)
 - Library news and events (159 subscribers)
 - Learn to Swim (880 subscribers)
 - Community update (52 subscribers)
 - Kiama Hospital update (43 subscribers)
 - What's on (57 subscribers)
- Residents can subscribe through home page of Council's website

Council's electronic newsletters are delivered direct to subscribers' chosen email inboxes. Some are regular newsletters while others act as one-off alert style newsletters.

Mayoral column/

Kiama Independent

- Delivered to 7270 homes

Council's Facebook page (1764 Likes)

Twitter page (563 Followers)

Council's website (average 2293 visitations | 8016 total page views per week)

Column is styled as the Mayor's opinion piece. A 'down-to-earth' tone is used with the aim to build community relations between Mayor (and therefore Council) and our community.

Media release/interview Traditional method of informing community about Council matters/issues via print and broadcast media. Refer to Council's Media Policy for details on how media releases and interviews are arranged.

Kiama Independent

- Delivered to 7270 homes weekly
- Deadline for information Thursday prior to next Wednesday's edition

Illawarra Mercury

- 15,846 average daily print circulation
- 2.36 million monthly website page impressions

Gerringong Whispers

- Circulation 3000

The Bugle

- Circulation 8500

WIN News

- Aired throughout the Illawarra, Southern Highlands and parts of the South Coast NSW

**Advertisement/
public notice:**

'Community news' page

Kiama Independent

- Delivered to 7270 homes

Gerringong Whispers

- Circulation 3000

Council's website

- (129 average views per week)

Council's Facebook page (1764 Likes)

Twitter page (563 Followers)

Council purchases advertising space (called 'Community news') in the *Kiama Independent* on a weekly basis as needed and in *Gerringong Whispers* on a monthly basis.

The weekly advertisement printed in the *Kiama Independent* is placed on Council's website on the day of publication.

Advertisements separate to 'Community news' may be booked if required either within these local publications or in other newspapers/publications.

Council uses advertising agency Leonards to book advertisements. Council's Executive Assistants are responsible for placing adverts. Staff who wish to place an advertisement need to supply content for advertising to Executive Assistants on the Monday in the week prior to the required print date. Refer to our Advertising Procedure for more information (TRIM 15/73798).

Brochures, flyers:

Non-addressed, general information containing Council's logo on specific events, programs, processes.

Brochures and flyers may be distributed:

- with rates instalment notices (conditions apply, speak to Communications)
- street walker deliveries, cannot be delivered to mailboxes with 'no junk mail' stickers
- Australia Post to specific local areas or municipality wide (unaddressed and addressed options available)

- by inserting into local publications such as *Kiama Focus*, *The Bugle*, school newsletters, *Kiama Independent*
- by uploading to Council's social media accounts.

**Banners, signage
foyer TV:**

Appropriate banners may be displayed in certain areas of the municipality to catch the attention of people passing by. Banners must contain messages that are brief and to the point. Refer to Engineering and Works for advice and approval on displaying banners.

Information can be displayed on Council's Administration Building Foyer TV to members of the general public waiting at our Customer Services desk.

Refer to Council's Foyer TV instructions for details on how to set up information slides (TRIM 14/66171).

**Business Report/
Report for information:**

Business Report

Official report to Council on a particular project/matter/issue that contains a recommendation for the elected Council to adopt.

Report for Information

A written document included at the end of Council's Business Papers. The informative report is used as an opportunity to educate, update, and promote to Councillors, a particular project/event/matter where a Council recommendation is not required.

Business Reports and Reports for Information must be submitted to the relevant Department Director for approval 1-2 weeks prior to the Council Meeting date. Check with your Director for more information. Business Papers are made available to the general public the Friday prior to a Council meeting.

**Website notice/
social media post/
online noticeboards:**

www.kiama.nsw.gov.au

- Council's Facebook page (1764 Likes)**
- Kiama Library's Facebook page (954 Likes)**
- Kiama Leisure Centre Facebook page (647 Likes)**
- The Pavilion, Kiama Facebook page (376 Likes)**
- Kiama Youth Centre Facebook page (188 Likes)**
- Kiama Coast Holiday Parks page (1767 Likes)**
- Discover Kiama Facebook page (380 Likes)**
- Kiama Cultural Arts Network Facebook page (265 Likes)**

- Council's Twitter page (416 Followers)**
- Kiama Library Twitter page (886 Followers)**
- Discover Kiama Twitter page (103 Followers)**

- Council's Instagram account (New)**
- The Pavilion, Kiama Instagram account (120 Followers)**
- Kiama Library Instagram account (39 Followers)**

- Kiama Library Pinterest account (130 Followers)**
- Discover Kiama Pinterest account (13 Followers)**

Kiama Cultural Arts Network WordPress blog (562 Followers)

Information made available on Council's website and social media platforms. It may be created as stand-alone communication; to complement other communication material; and/or to provide information available to download.

Website notices and social media posts can be issued immediately, or set to go 'live' on a particular date.

Content should be provided to a minimum of five working days to Communications.

Online noticeboards

Wave FM
i98FM
ABC Radio Illawarra
WIN NEWS

Local radio stations have free online noticeboards that can be used to publicise community events.

Seek information

- Drop-in session:** Council Officers are available for a certain time period at a nominated venue for community members to drop by and discuss particular matters.
- Interviews:** A structured process to canvass a specific topic/issue/matter with individuals.
- Interviews can be conducted by Council Officers or independent specialists. Responses are recorded, collated and evaluated.
- Public exhibition/submissions:** A process often required by NSW Government legislation for specific types of issues. Material is made available for public comment and clearly states how and where submissions should be made to Council.
- Public meeting:** Can take place at a community venue, at the site under discussion, or at Council' offices. Invitations can be sent by one, some or all of the following:
- advertising in local papers
 - letterbox drop
 - media release
 - telephone contact with community leaders
 - website notice.
- Suggestion box:** A way to invite the community to provide their ideas on a specific topic. Suggestion boxes should be made available at all public Council buildings:
- Kiama Library
 - Gerringong Library branch
 - Council's Customer Service desk/Administration Building
 - Leisure Centre
 - Joyce Wheatley Community Centre
- Suggestion boxes should also be made available at as many other secure locations as possible. E.g. other government agency buildings.
- Survey:** A statistically correct survey of attitudes, beliefs or information. This method should be conducted by independent survey specialists where possible and can be done by phone, written survey (including online), and/or by doorknock of individual households.

Engage people

- Focus groups/workshops:** Participants are invited because they are a resident or they have a particular involvement or stake in the matter being discussed. These are usually led by a trained facilitator and the purpose is to discover a range of opinions that may exist on a particular topic. However, focus groups and workshops should not be used to measure how widely those various opinions are held in the community.
- Locations that encourage greater community involvement should be considered, such as venues outside of Council offices.

Large group collaboration:	Intensive multi-day planning sessions with stakeholders to canvass a strategic issue or plan and prepare a response that sums up the combined ideas and wisdom of the group.
Meeting by invitation:	Community leaders, key stakeholders, and representatives are invited to meet to discuss, debate, and exchange views.
Meetings with Council committees/precincts/ advisory groups:	A formal consultation process using the group or committee's Terms of Reference. Meetings are documented with minutes.
Personal briefing/s:	Held at the request of a member or members of the local community to discuss a particular issue with a responsible officer. Briefings may include a Councillor or Councillors.
Seminars/conferences:	Follow an agenda to address topics of interest to Council and are used to educate, inform and engage people in major matters.
Site meeting/tour:	Engagement at a specific site, can be facilitated by key stakeholders under Council's direction.
Online interaction:	Used to seek information and input from the community through online mediums such as moderated social media platforms, website forums or videoconferences, and/or video submissions.
Kiosk:	A kiosk (table/desk/tent/gazebo) set up in a public area staffed by Council officers as a way of providing information and seeking information from people passing by.
Community information Gatherings	Casual information meetings held twice a year for members of the public to come along and discover and provide feedback on the projects we are completing, and the activities we provide. The gatherings will be held in an informal setting and be presented by Councillors, Management and relevant staff. They will provide the opportunity for the general public to find out how they can get involved in Council activities and their communities.

What to do				When you're handling			
	Event/activity	Site specific	Locality improvement	Service/program planning	Policy and planning development	Major projects & Strategic issues/resource plans	Integrated plans (including budget)
E = Essential R= Required for most circumstances C = Consider N = Not essential							
Share information	Letter/email/sms to specific parties (Councillors must receive copy minimum 24 hours prior)	C	R	R	R	E	E
	Letterbox drop (whole LGA or targeted area)	C	R	R	C	C	R
	Council newsletter (<i>Kimunico</i>)	R	C	C	C	C	E
	e-newsletters	R	R	C	R	C	E
	Mayoral column/media release/interview	C	C	C	C	C	R
	Advertisement/public notice	C	R	C	C	R	E
	Brochure/flyer/	C	N	N	C	N	R
	Banners/Council's Administration Centre foyer TV	R	N	N	C	N	C
	Report	C	C	N	C	E	E
	Website notice/social media post	R	C	E	C	R	E
Seek information	Drop-in session	N	C	N	N	N	C
	Interviews	N	N	N	C	N	N
	Public exhibition and submissions	N	C	N	N	E	E
	Public meeting	N	C	N	N	C	E
	Suggestion box	C	C	N	N	C	C
	Survey (written/telephone/web/social media/sms) *required for CSP end of term/development	C	C	N	N	C	E* & R
Engage people	Focus group/workshop	N	N	N	N	C	E
	Large group collaboration E.g. charettes/intensive multi-day planning sessions with stakeholders	N	N	N	N	N	E
	Meeting by invitation	N	N	N	N	C	C
	Meeting with council committees/ precincts/neighbourhood groups/users	C	C	N	C	E	R
	Personal briefings	N	N	N	N	R	R
	Seminars/conferences	N	N	N	C	N	C
	Site meeting/tour	N	C	N	N	C	C
	Online interaction	N	N	N	N	C	E

Prepared by: Communications Unit
Date prepared: December 2015
Date endorsed by Council: 15 March 2016
Last review date:
Next review date: March 2018

e.g. social media and website forum/ videoconference/video submissions							
Kiosk	C	C	C	C	C	R	E
Community information gatherings	C	C	C	C	C	R	E

Note: This table is to be used to guide community engagement strategies. Strategies and the engagement techniques used may vary depending on the specific considerations of each individual project.

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Our other important documents

This Community Engagement Strategy ties in with Council's other communications policies:

Kiama Municipal Council Style Guide (TRIM 14/46769)

Communications Procedure (TRIM 15/59177)

Social Media Policy (TRIM 14/57587)