

## **Community Strategic Plan review – Tourism** ***Sound decisions for a sustainable future***

The Community Strategic Plan is the over-arching document that drives Council decisions, ensuring we focus on the projects and services that are of highest importance to our community.

The plan is reviewed after every Council election. This is your opportunity to have a direct say on the vision and priorities for the Kiama Municipality now and into the future.

For our Community Strategic Plan to be effective, it needs to be grounded in reality. It must be informed by current challenges, so that Council and the community can together make strategic choices that will strengthen our ongoing financial sustainability.

### **The current state of play**

Kiama Municipal Council is responsible for delivering extensive services to the community and is the region's largest employer. Unlike other local councils, we also provide aged care services through Blue Haven Illawarra.

In the 2021/22 financial year, Council is projecting an operational deficit of \$2.7M. We're facing significant challenges across three areas:

1. Financial sustainability – cash flow, liquidity, and financial management
2. Organisational capability, culture and performance – how we invest in staff and systems
3. Risk and governance – how we set the strategic direction that drives sound financial and operational decisions

To be sustainable, we need to change the way we operate both parts of the organisation - Blue Haven and Council's general local government services.

### **About Tourism in the Kiama local government area**

The Kiama Municipality is a popular tourism destination with our unspoilt beaches, rolling green hills and famous blowholes attracting people here since the mid-1800s.

The Tourism industry has become increasingly vital for our local economy, injecting more than \$244million annually and an estimated 1,510 direct and indirect jobs (*Tourism Research Australia, from the year ending 2019*). It is the areas highest economic driver.

Like many destinations, tourism in Kiama has experienced a downturn during the global pandemic.

Council owns and operates five holiday parks, and also funds Destination Kiama, which operates across four areas:

- Destination marketing, planning, partnerships, industry and experience development.
- Visitor Servicing – including our Visitor Information Centre at Blowhole Point which (in a normal year) services over 60,000 inquiries per annum.
- Destination Events – Facilitation of major events and oversight and delivery of Destination Event Sponsorship Funding.
- The Pavilion Kiama – Conferences, Weddings, Business Events and Community Events.

Council has a Strategic Tourism and Events Plan, which seeks to achieve economic and social benefits for our municipality by sustainably growing tourism and events.

The reopening of borders and relaxing of Covid restrictions put Councils in regional and rural areas well-positioned for tourism growth, but fierce competition from other regions and the need to prioritise Council's budget also brings additional challenges.

### **Over to you**

To help shape the future of tourism across the Kiama Municipality, we'd like to hear your views on these questions:

1. How do you rate the importance of the Destination Kiama brand? (EG: the sum of the experiences our destination offers, plus the stories that people tell and hear about those experiences)?
2. What is the role of local government in a modern and changing tourism industry?
  - Learning and development
  - Product and experience development
  - Destination marketing
  - Visitor Servicing
3. Do you believe tourism should be a high priority for Council, or are other services more important to you? If so, which ones?
4. How would you generate more revenue for the tourism sector in Kiama whilst supporting the needs of the community?
5. Do you believe Council's fees and charges are high enough to support its current level of support for tourism in Kiama?
6. What other ideas do you have for tourism in Kiama and to what extent do you believe Council should be involved?
7. Do you have any other comments about tourism in our region?

### **How to have your say**

Attend a public workshop to help update our Community Strategic Plan (CSP)

<https://www.kiama.nsw.gov.au/Council/Your-say/Community-Strategic-Planning-Workshops>

Complete the CSP survey on our website at <https://www.kiama.nsw.gov.au/Council/Your-say/Community-Strategic-Plan>

