13.2   Post exhibition endorsement: Community Engagement Strategy

CSP Objective: Outcome 5.2: Governance is transparent and builds trust

CSP Strategy: 5.2.3 Engage with the community in meaningful dialogue and
                    demonstrate how community participation is being used to inform
                    decisions

Delivery Program: 5.2.3.1 Implement the Community Engagement Strategy.

Item 13.2

Summary

Council at its meeting on 16 April 2024 resolved to endorse the draft Community
Engagement Strategy for public exhibition; and if submissions were received to
receive a further report back, including an engagement report, on any proposed
amendments to the Strategy.

The draft Community Engagement Strategy was placed on public exhibition from
17 April to 17 May 2024 for public comment and input. During this time, Council staff
also undertook further work to engage stakeholder groups in the community (eg:
youth, people living with disability) and further refine the Strategy.

Council received 13 submissions during the public exhibition period, attended four
community pop-ups and engaged with youth of all ages, Officers attended a Council-
hosted developer industry forum, presented the strategy to the Jamberoo Valley
Residents and Ratepayers Association (by invitation) and held two Disability Inclusion
Focus Group discussions.

Engagement Reports for Phase 1: Co-Design and Phase 2: Consultation-Public
Exhibition are included (note the report for Phase 1: Co-Design includes a link to the
'Your community, your say' survey data.)

The Community Engagement Strategy has been refined, added and amended where
appropriate, based on the feedback gathered during the exhibition and interim period.
Additional images have been added and all significant changes made to the strategy
have been outlined in the Phase 2 Community Engagement Report.

Financial implication

Nil

Risk implication

Risk of not having an updated strategy include falling short of community expectations
and Integrated Planning and Reporting (IP&R) requirements.

Policy

Nil

Consultation (internal)

Kiama Council staff – draft Strategy shared with staff and feedback gathered.

Report of the Chief Executive Officer

13.2   Post exhibition endorsement: Community Engagement Strategy (cont)

Communication/Community engagement

Summary of Engagement Activities

Date	Event	Reach	Engaged
Phase 1: consultation - Co-design			
29- Feb	Your community your say Project page	879	
29-Feb	Press release: "Growth and Community Engagement" on Council website, distributed to media lists.	959	
29-Feb	Social media schedule launched of 8 posts		
13 March	Launch of "your community, your say" survey – online and paper versions		242
13-Mar	Infrastructure & Liveability Committee – workshop		7
14-Mar	Flyers printed and handed out, and available at Council's Administration Centre and Libraries.	1000	
14-17 March	Council staff at Household Bulky Waste event engaging with community and handing out flyers	520	50
22-Mar	Community pop-ups at Kiama Downs - FoodWorks	100	20
22-Mar	Community pop-ups at Kiama Downs - IGA	30	10
22-Mar	Meeting with Precincts and Associations (KAPA)	40	9
23-Mar	Community pop-ups at Minnamurra	20	5
23-Mar	Community pop-ups at Jamberoo	50	20
23-Mar	Community pop-ups at Gerringong	200	25
23-Mar	Community pop-ups at Gerroa	2	
26-Mar	Sustainable Communities Committee – workshop		7
27-Mar	Community pop-ups at Farmers Market	50	25
2-Apr	Meeting with Kiama High School SRC students		16
12-Apr	Industry forum round table discussion		60
Phase 2: Consultation - Public Exhibition			
17-Apr	Press release "Draft Community Engagement Strategy placed on public exhibition" on Council website, distributed to media lists	256	

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Report of the Chief Executive Officer

13.2   Post exhibition endorsement: Community Engagement Strategy (cont)

Date	Event	Reach	Engaged
17-Apr	Publication Community engagement report: Phase 1	15	
18-Apr	Social media schedule launched of 6 posts		
30-Apr	Community pop-ups at Kiama Library	50	15
1-May	Observation of Primary School Engagement		90
2-May	Community pop-ups at Gerringong Library	20	8
2-May	Community pop-ups at Kiama Leisure Centre	55	10
7-May	JVRRA - presentation and discussion		20
8-May	Community pop-ups at Kiama Farmers Market	40	10
9-May	Community pop-ups at Kiama Leisure Centre	40	10
15-May	Observation of Highschool School Engagement		200
31-May	Disability Inclusion Interviews		3
	Total	**3,311**	**620**

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Attachments

1   Community Engagement Strategy - June2024⇩

2   Community Engagement Report - Phase 1: Co-Design⇩

3   Community Engagement Report - Phase 2: Consultation - Public Exhibition⇩

Enclosures
Nil

RECOMMENDATION

That Council adopt the Community Engagement Strategy and publish to the Council website.

Background

Kiama Municipal Council is committed to developing a culture of meaningful community engagement to achieve better and more sustainable outcomes for the municipality.

Report of the Chief Executive Officer

13.2   Post exhibition endorsement: Community Engagement Strategy (cont)

Council took a two-phase approach to re-draft its Community Engagement Strategy as a practical framework for Council to engage with diverse voices across our community, businesses and other stakeholders in a meaningful and measurable way.

The Strategy will inform Council's renewed Community Engagement program, to make it easier for community and stakeholders to have a say about the issues that matter most.

The finalised Strategy outlines the principles and processes for best-practice community engagement, in line with Council's Community Strategic Plan 2022 – 2032, and in accordance with legislative requirements.

Under Section 420A of the New South Wales Local Government Act 1993, Councils are required to establish and implement a Community Engagement Strategy for the purpose of engaging with the local community to support the development of all plans, policies, programs and key activities.

The finalised strategy is a complete rework of previous strategies, with Kiama Council taking a fresh, co-design approach to developing the strategy, and continuing to take on feedback from community, stakeholders, staff and Councillors throughout the exhibition period to refine the Strategy.

The engagement process involved community pop-ups, workshops, a survey, gathering submissions, presentations and focus groups, reaching almost 3,500 people.

Community Engagement Reports on both Phase 1: Co-design and Phase 2: Consultation-Public Exhibition, are attached to this report. Survey data from Phase 1 can be accessed via Council's website via: https://www.kiama.nsw.gov.au/Council/Your-say/Draft-Community-Engagement-Strategy.

Under the Integrated Planning and Reporting guidelines, Council must review its Community Engagement Strategy in the three months post-local Government Elections (by December 2024).

It is hoped that, given all the hard work that has gone into the Strategy throughout 2024, this process can be streamlined and will take the form of a minor review, thus freeing the new Council to direct their focus to high-level strategic documents such as the Community Strategic Plan and important and pressing matters such as Council's ongoing Performance Improvement Order.

Item 13.2

KIAMA MUNICIPAL COUNCIL
your council. your community

Community Engagement Strategy
2024-2028

Your community, your say

Acknowledgement of Country

Kiama Municipal Council acknowledges the Wodi Wodi people on Dharawal country as the traditional custodians of the land on which our Municipality is located. We pay our respects to Elders past, present and future. We are committed to honouring Australian Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples' unique cultural and spiritual relationships to the land, waters and seas and their rich contribution to our community.

2 | Community Engagement Strategy

Front cover image: Engagement at Kiama Library
This page image: Kiama Council Australia Day 2024 activities. Peter Izzard Photography

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Overview

Purpose

Kiama Municipal Council (Council) is committed to developing a culture of meaningful community engagement to achieve better and more sustainable outcomes for the municipality. The Community Engagement Strategy serves as a practical framework for Council, underpinned by the Social Justice Principles of access, equity, participation and rights, to engage with diverse voices across our community. It outlines the principles and processes for best-practice community engagement, in line with Council's Community Strategic Plan 2022 – 2032 and in accordance with legislative requirements.

Legislative requirements

Community engagement is delivered with due consideration to mandatory and statutory requirements to which Council must adhere. These requirements may limit or allow community input into Council decision-making. Under Section 420A of the New South Wales Local Government Act 1993, Councils are required to establish and implement a Community Engagement Strategy to engage with the local community to support the development of all plans, policies, programs and key activities.

The Integrated Planning and Reporting (IP&R) framework, displayed in diagram 1, illustrates the important role of community engagement across Council's planning. Under this framework, Community Engagement Strategies must:

- Be based on the Social Justice Principles of access, equity, participation and rights
- Identify relevant stakeholder groups in the community
- Outline the methods that Council will use to engage each of these groups
- Allow sufficient time to effectively undertake the engagement.

Community Participation Plan

Council is also required to have a Community Participation Plan (CPP). The CPP sets out when and how Council will engage with the community on statutory planning and development matters, such as development applications and planning proposals. The CPP sits alongside this Strategy in providing Council's overall framework for community engagement.

Diagram 1: Integrated Planning and Reporting framework

4 | Community Engagement Strategy

Understanding community engagement

Community engagement is about fostering productive relationships between Council and the communities it serves, making better decisions and improving outcomes for our people and places. The Community Engagement Strategy is an opportunity to expand Council's engagement practices beyond the legislative requirements, delivering community engagement that is meaningful to the communities we serve.

Best practice
Council strives to deliver best-practice community engagement based on the Core Values of the International Association for Public Participation (IAP2). These are:

1. Public participation is based on the belief that those who are affected by a decision have a right to be involved in the decision-making process.
2. Public participation includes the promise that the public's contribution will influence the decision.
3. Public participation promotes sustainable decisions by recognising and communicating the needs and interests of all participants, including decision-makers.
4. Public participation seeks out and facilitates the participation of those potentially affected by or interested in a decision.
5. Public participation seeks input from participants in designing how they participate.
6. Public participation provides participants with the information they need to participate in a meaningful way.
7. Public participation communicates to participants how their input affected the decision.

IAP2's Public Participation Spectrum identifies five levels of stakeholder and community engagement. It is recognised as the industry standard community engagement model. Council has adopted the Spectrum to facilitate best-practice engagement.

	Inform	Consult	Involve	Collaborate	Empower
Engagement goal	To provide community with the right information to help them understand a Council plan, policy, program or activity.	To gather community feedback on a Council plan, policy, program or activity.	To work with community in the development of a Council plan, policy, program or activity, ensuring their views are clearly understood and considered.	To partner with community in the development and delivery of a Council plan, policy, program or activity.	To place final decision-making in the hands of community.
Council commitment	We will keep you informed throughout the life of the project.	We will keep you informed, listen to your feedback, and share how community input influenced our final decision.	We will work with you to ensure your feedback is directly considered and share how community's input influenced our final decision.	We will incorporate your advice and recommen-dations into our final decision.	We will implement what you decide.
Example methods	• Council Website • Social Media • Council e-newsletter (Kimunico)	• Online or paper surveys • Call for submissions • Community pop-ups	• Digital engagement • Workshops • Panel discussions	• Council Committees • Working groups	• Citizen Juries • Voting

Developing the Strategy

Developed in consultation with both the community and Council staff, this Strategy outlines community priorities for meaningful engagement with Council and the Staff requirements to deliver meaningful engagement effectively. The Strategy was also developed with due consideration to local, State and Federal strategies and plans, policies, and other requirements. Insights from community engagement activities undertaken as part of the development and delivery of the Community Strategic Plan (2022-2032) and Disability Inclusion Action Plan were also used to inform this Strategy.

Consultation

A series of engagement activities were delivered across Phase 1: Co-design and Phase 2: Public Exhibition in early 2024 to guide the development of the Strategy. Detailed Engagement Summary Reports for both phases are available on our Your Say page.

Community consultation	Staff consultation
• Community pop-ups across the Municipality • Met with various committees and stakeholder groups • "Your community, your say" survey • Youth engagement observations • Called for submissions on the Draft Strategy	• Cross-departmental staff workshop • Staff survey • Interviews with executives and key staff members • Councillor briefing • Called for submissions on the Draft Strategy

What we heard

Community told us:	Staff told us:
• Meet community where they are to be more visible and reach a greater diversity of voices. • Clear and transparent communication on the purpose of engagement, timeline and the extent of community influence on decisions. • Close the loop through timely follow-up communications tailored to the audience, detailing progress, outcomes, how input was used and fulfilment of commitments. • Community pop-ups with relevant staff are a popular, informal and effective way for the community to interact with Council staff. • Collaborate with youth and other underrepresented groups to co-design and implement engagement activities that are relevant and accessible to them.	• Significant barriers to overcome include limited resources and budget and required organisational /systems transformation. • Provide clarity on roles and responsibilities for all stages of community engagement. • Build staff capacity and provide practical tools. • Consider the time required to effectively plan, design, implement and report on community engagement. • Continuously evaluate community engagement activities to ensure the program effectively meets community needs.

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Community preferences

Receive Council information	Provide Council with input and feedback:
Multiple mediums, with a preference for: • Local newspapers • Regular e-newsletter • Rates notice/brochure in letterbox • Council's social media pages • Council website	Multiple mediums, with a preference for: • Filling out a survey • Writing a letter or email • Community pop-ups • Quick online polls • Phone call

Interested to be engaged on
1. Town planning and development (65%)
2. Opportunities to provide feedback on Council projects (48%)
3. Environment and land/coastal management (35%)
4. Parks, venues, playgrounds, recreational facilities (34%)
5. Roadworks and infrastructure (26%)

"It sounds like you're asking the right questions"

"In 52 years in the area, there's been lots of change!"

"Progress can be qualitative not quantitative"

"Youth are often not interested in engaging with council, too busy with other things!"

"Council needs to repair the community's trust before it can move forward"

"Ratepayers are looking for outcomes, not more talk"

"You can reach young parents at the gym, pre-schools, Leisure Centre and daycares"

"Council needs to close the loop and be transparent"

"If we spend time making a submission, we really want to know how our input has made a difference"

"Students liked feeling heard and giving feedback on big issues impacting the community,"

"Our youth are the future of our community, so being heard is something that is very important to today's society."

Strategic approach

Insights gathered during consultation have directly informed Council's approach to the Community Engagement Strategy.

The following are developed in response to input from those engaged regarding what the Strategy should aim to achieve. They will guide how Council designs, plans, delivers and reports on future engagement activities.

Objective

To be a practical framework for delivering meaningful and measurable community engagement while strengthening the diversity of community voices.

Principles

In addition to the strategic objective above, insights from community and staff consultation led to the development of 5 key principles for undertaking meaningful community engagement, which are underpinned by the Social Justice Principles:

These are:

- **Open and honest**
  Engagement will be open, honest and transparent so community understands how their feedback will be taken into consideration and why certain decisions have been made.
- **Proactive**
  Engagement will proactively seek to understand community perspectives early in decision-making.
- **Genuine**
  Engagement will seek to genuinely listen to what community has to say and to ensure it is accurately captured.
- **Inclusive and accessible**
  Engagement will meet diverse community voices where they are and in a way that allows them to participate fully.
- **Accountable**
  Engagement will ensure community and stakeholders have clear oversight through continuous communication. Council will be accountable for closing the loop and ensuring community and stakeholders are kept informed at all stages of the project lifecycle.

Actions

Council will uphold the key principles of meaningful community engagement by adopting the following actions (based on input from staff and community stakeholder consultation). It is important to note that due consideration is to be given to budget and resource limitations in delivering these actions.

1. Build staff capacity

We will:
1. Provide IAP2 training to managers and other relevant staff.
2. Develop a community engagement toolkit that includes planning and reporting templates to support staff and standardise engagement across the organisation.
3. Identify and train engagement champions across Council teams to support the work of Council's Communications and Engagement Team.
4. Provide embedded community engagement training into staff onboarding and ongoing professional development to ensure all staff understand Council's commitment to best-practice engagement.
5. Develop an approvals process to ensure engagement processes meet internal, legislative and accessibility requirements.

2. Meet community where they are

We will:
1. Clearly communicate and promote engagement opportunities through various mediums, e.g. local newspapers, regular Council e-newsletters, Council website, Council social media, rates notice, etc.
2. Offer a range of face-to-face, online and paper-based engagement opportunities for people to engage with Council decisions in various ways.
3. Develop an engagement calendar to meet community where they are and streamline engagement activities across the organisation (see Appendix 1 for the proposed Community Engagement Schedule).
4. Explore digital engagement platforms to enhance accessibility and broaden community reach, including online polls that provide feedback by design.
5. Build on existing community networks and identify community champions to drive engagement with communities of place, identity, interest and need.
6. Collaborate with youth and other underrepresented groups to co-design and implement engagement activities that are relevant and accessible to them.

3. Close the loop

We will:
1. Develop processes to close the loop in a variety of ways, including Council reporting, website, email, social media and other mediums, with a focus on explaining how and when community feedback was considered in the decision-making process.
2. Continually develop and improve Council's community engagement practises and capacity through regular review and evaluation.
3. Assess engagement activities' effectiveness against the Strategy's principles and the diversity, equity and inclusion objectives.
4. Monitor community sentiment via a range of mediums e.g. social media monitoring, a demographic "community satisfaction" survey of Kiama Municipality, feedback from workshops, community events, committees and community groups.

See Appendix 2 for the Strategy Evaluation Metrics.

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Attachment 1

Engaging with community

Council, commits to engaging with a broad cross-section of the community. The community includes many stakeholders, which means Council needs to understand and balance their diverse interests, priorities and needs. When planning community engagement, Council will analyse the stakeholders and target those who might be interested in, impacted by or benefit from a plan, project or decision. The key stakeholders are broadly described below:

Key stakeholders

Stakeholders	Description
Residents and ratepayers	Anybody who lives and/or pays rates in the Kiama Local Government Area (LGA)
Kiama's future	Kiama's young people who will lead the area in the future
Communities of place	Location-based communities (towns, neighbourhoods, streets)
Communities of interest	Communities that share activities, events or interests
Communities of identity	People of all ages, backgrounds, gender identities and religions
Communities of need	Kiama residents most vulnerable to the impact of decisions such as those experiencing or at risk of homelessness, those with different abilities, people from non-English speaking backgrounds, those who rent and those immediately impacted by disasters
Schools and education providers	Primary and secondary educational institutions and early learning providers
Business community	Kiama businesses, business networks and associations
Community participants	Those who use or access council facilities such as libraries, parks and recreation centres
Community organisations and groups	Council Committees, precincts and associations, interagency networks, community, religious and faith-based organisations, voluntary groups, and sporting and recreation clubs
NSW and Federal government departments/agencies	State and Commonwealth departments and agencies with impacting plans or information
Neighbouring councils and representative bodies	Surrounding local government areas and joint organisations such as ISJO, NSW Office of Local Government (NSWOLG)
Councillors	Nine elected representatives of Council
Council Staff	All employees of Council, including, contractors and volunteers
Visitors and tourists	Those who visit the Kiama LGA

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Attachment 1

Diversity, equity and inclusion

Council is committed to strengthening the diverse voices of our community. We aim to provide inclusive and equitable engagement processes, ensuring that anybody who wants or needs to participate can do so. Through this strategy, Council reaffirms its commitment to engage with:

- Young people
- Elderly people
- Families and single-parent households
- Aboriginal and Torres Strait Island communities
- People with disabilities
- People from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds
- LGBTQIA+ communities, and;
- Low-income households.

Council will support community participation, accessibility and inclusion by providing:

- Plain English and multi-modal information that meets accessibility requirements and provide key documents in Easy Read format,
- Multiple ways to provide input and feedback, including face-to-face, online, and paper-based engagement options, and;
  Translated documents as requested or required.

Decision making

Community views, ideas and local knowledge are an important part of the decision-making process. Other things Council needs to consider include:

- Budget or financial impact
- Legislation (State and Federal)
- Council policies and resolutions (endorsed by our elected representatives)
- Evidence provided by technical and professional assessment and industry best practice, and;
- Economic, environmental, social and governance impacts.

Council Strategies and Action Plans

Council delivers several strategies, policies and action plans to guide the delivery of its services and operations. These will guide what projects are undertaken through Council's Delivery Program, and inform the design and delivery of engagement programs, including:

- Community Strategic Plan (2022-2032)
- Community Participation Plan (2019)
- Committees Framework Policy (2023)
- Community Development Strategy (under development)
- Disability Inclusion Action Plan (2023-2027)
- Reconciliation Action Plan (under development)
- Cultural Plan (under development)
- Growth and Housing Strategy (under development)
- Economic Development Strategy (Under development)
- Tourism and Events Plan (2022–2026)
- Corporate Emissions Reduction Plan (Net Zero Strategy) 2021-2031
- Service Reviews
- Performance Improvement Order
- Strategic Finance and Governance Improvement Plan (under development)

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Item 13.2 - Post exhibition endorsement: Community
Engagement Strategy

Attachments 1 - Community
Engagement Strategy - June2024

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Attachment 1

Community engagement opportunities

Community engagement is undertaken when there is an opportunity for impacted communities to influence specific actions, outcomes or decisions, or when there is a legislative requirement to do so. The following matrix allows project teams to determine if engagement is required, to what degree, and which stakeholders will need to be engaged.
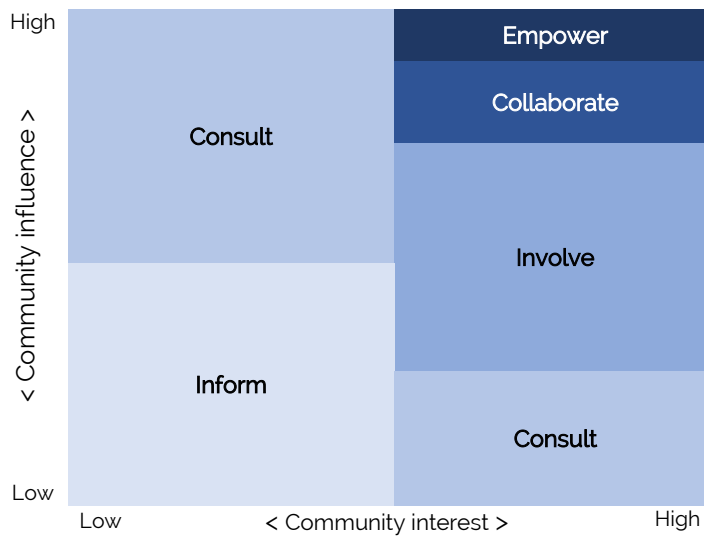
Note: If community engagement is not required or desired, Council should inform the community about the action, outcome or decision being made.

Roles and responsibilities

Many stakeholders play a role in delivering meaningful community engagement. While the Strategy is focused on Council's role, it is important to acknowledge that the participation of many stakeholders will influence its overall success.

Stakeholder	Roles and responsibilities
Mayor and Councillors	• Participate as an elected member, listen to the views of the community and consider those views when making decisions. • Play an important role in reflecting the views of the community back to the staff ensuring that concerns and aspirations are heard. • Support community engagement by approving adequate funding and/or resources.
CEO and Directors	• Ensure the strategy is implemented and applied across Council projects. • Oversee engagement processes of Council and ensure engagement needs and risks are considered. • Approve Community Engagement Plans developed by Project Lead and provided by Managers.

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Stakeholder	Roles and responsibilities
CEO and Directors (cont'd)	• Report and communicate community engagement activities and outcomes (as provided by Managers) to elected members.
Managers and Coordinators	• Maintain an 'engagement mindset' when overseeing projects, plans, and activities in their team. • Support teams to prioritise the 4 stages – design, plan, implement and close the loop – of community engagement activities. • Ensure engagement activities within their team are communicated to elected members through the CEO and Directors.
Project Lead	• Community engagement is the responsibility of all Council staff who deliver projects or services that impact the community. • Work with the Community Engagement Officer and use the Community Engagement Toolkit to prepare engagement plans, deliver activities, and report back on engagement outcomes, including adequate feedback to community.
Community Engagement Officer	• Train and guide staff to ensure a consistent, best-practice, and evaluated approach to community engagement activities. • Develop a Community Engagement Toolkit, including templates available to all staff. • Develop and manage an engagement schedule (see Appendix 1) to streamline engagement activities across Council • Manage a Community Engagement Register. • Collaborate closely with the Community Hubs Manager to leverage existing networks and engagement opportunities and to ensure diversity and inclusion principles are met.
Communications Officer	• Work with the Community Engagement Officer and project teams to create communications plans for engagement activities. • Contribute to the Community Engagement Register. • Provide advice on appropriate communication methods to promote engagement opportunities and outcomes.
Manager Communications & Engagement	• Manage this Strategy's implementation, including quarterly reporting on the Community Engagement plans, schedule and register. • Checking final engagement plans.
Community (see key stakeholders table p10)	• Responsible for contributing to the decision-making processes available to them, including staying informed about engagement opportunities, considering the information or options available, providing timely feedback, participating respectfully, and considering the ideas of others.

Community Engagement Strategy | 13

Four-stage engagement framework

The following engagement framework is used by Council to design, plan, implement and report on community engagement activities. This framework ensures that engagement processes are **meaningful** and **measurable,** promoting consistent, best-practise engagement across the organisation. In addition to the steps below, Kiama Council's Engagement team will develop a Community Engagement Toolkit to assist staff throughout the four stages of this framework. It is important to note that due consideration is to be given to budget and resource limitations in delivering engagement activities.

1. Design

Engagement design lays the groundwork for effective community engagement processes. In this stage, project teams will prepare an **engagement brief** that outlines the context and scope of the engagement and identifies key stakeholders.

Context	Understanding the project context will help determine the purpose of engagement and integrate it into the broader project delivery plan.
	Questions to consider:
	☐ What is the plan, policy, program or activity being delivered, why is it being delivered and who is responsible for delivering it?
	☐ What is the final project action, outcome or decision that must be made and who is in charge of making it?
	☐ Who will be the Project Lead, in charge of preparing engagement plans, delivering activities, and reporting back on engagement outcomes?
	☐ Why is community engagement required or desired?
	☐ What project milestones and dates are critical to meet?
	☐ Are there any timeframes, issues or assumptions that may impact the project?
Scope	The engagement scope defines the extent of community engagement required. It identifies what can and cannot be influenced, helping to manage expectations.
	Questions to consider:
	☐ What actions, outcomes or decisions can community influence and what cannot be changed? (negotiables and non-negotiables)
	☐ Is there a legislative requirement to fulfil?
	☐ How will community input be used in determining the final action, outcome or decision?
	☐ What information does Council require from community to inform next steps and decision-making? E.g. what question/s are being answered by engaging?
Stakeholders	Identifying stakeholders is essential to establishing the level/s of engagement required. It ensures engagement seeks a diversity of community voices.
	Questions to consider:
	☐ Who will be impacted or affected by the action, outcome or decision?
	☐ Who has an interest in the action, outcome or decision?
	☐ Which voices need to be strengthened? (diversity, equity and inclusion)

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Attachment 1

The following stakeholder analysis chart assists in identifying the community segments and/or individuals to be engaged, and determining the appropriate level/s of engagement based on:

- The impact of the action, outcome or decision on the individual or group
- The level of interest they have in the project
- The level of influence they have over the action, outcome or decision.

Stakeholders	Impact	Interest	Influence	Engagement
Segment 1	Low/medium /high	Low/medium/ high	Low/medium/ high	*Inform/Consult/ Involve/Collaborate /Empower*
Segment 2				
Segment 3				
Segment 4				
Segment 5				

2. Plan

Engagement planning is essential to delivering meaningful and measurable community engagement. In this phase, project teams will prepare an **engagement plan** that details the methods to be used and the resources required to undertake community engagement activities.

Schedule	Understanding where community engagement fits within the broader project plan helps guide the selection and sequencing of appropriate engagement methods.
	Questions to consider:
	☐ When in the delivery of the project is community input required or desired?
	☐ What key delivery milestones must be met?
	☐ What project or task dependencies should be considered in the planning of engagement activities?

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Attachment 1

Activities	Engagement methods/activities are selected to correspond with the determined level of stakeholder engagement. This may mean selecting different activities for different groups.
	They should be selected with due consideration to the project budget, timeframe, scale and complexity, and legislative requirements, among other factors.
	Activities should be designed to meet community where they are, ensuring community preferences and expectations are considered. Equitable and inclusive engagement opportunities must be provided to ensure a diversity of voices are heard.
	Questions to consider: ☐ What are the *project objectives* and what are the *engagement objectives*? ☐ What *outputs* are required from community to achieve these objectives? ☐ What are the best *activities* to generate these outputs?
	Other key considerations: ☐ What support materials are required to deliver engagement? e.g. communications plan, risk management plan ☐ How will engagement outputs (data) be collected, analysed and reported? ☐ What measures will support diverse voices to participate in the activity/activities? ☐ How and when will the community be informed of progress, outcomes, how input was used and fulfilment of commitments to close the loop? Consider timely, tailored and regular communication (see Continuous Communication p19).
Resourcing	A detailed **implementation plan** will identify resources required to deliver engagement, and determine roles and responsibilities for undertaking key tasks.
	Questions to consider: ☐ What tasks must be performed to prepare for engagement? ☐ What tangible and human resources are required to deliver the engagement? ☐ Who is responsible for coordinating these tasks and resources? (see Roles and Responsibilities p12) ☐ Who is responsible for capturing the engagement data and preparing the engagement report? ☐ Identify budget for engagement activities

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Engagement Methods Matrix
The following methods matrix provides an overview of common communication and engagement activities and tools.

As mentioned above, engagement methods are selected with due consideration to the level of engagement, project budget, timeframe, scale and complexity, and legislative requirements, among other factors.

	Inform	Consult	Involve	Collaborate	Empower
Council website	X				
Council e-newsletter (Kimunico)	X				
Social media	X				
Media release	X				
Local newspapers	X				
Rates notices	X				
Letters and email notifications	X				
Letter-box drops	X				
Posters, pamphlets, flyers	X				
Outdoor signage	X				
Print or digital factsheets and FAQs	X				
Door-knocking	X	X			
Presentation, meeting or briefing (in-person, phone or virtual)	X	X			
Online or printed survey		X			
Opinion poll		X			
Community pop-ups		X			
Comment, compliment, complaint form		X			
Online discussion board		X			
Calls for submission		X			
Council meetings or town hall engagements		X			
'Your Say' interactive website		X	X		
Citizen science (e.g. wildlife reporting)		X	X		
Reference or advisory groups		X	X	X	
Committees or Special councils (eg: youth council)		X	X	X	
Workshops		X	X	X	
Focus groups		X	X	X	
Panel discussions		X	X	X	
Roundtables		X	X	X	
Co-design			X	X	
Working groups			X	X	
Design charette			X	X	
Deliberative forums				X	X
Consensus conference				X	X
Voting					X
Citizens jury					X

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3. Implement

Implementation involves the delivery and monitoring of engagement activities to ensure activities align with project objectives. It also involves the processes for collecting and collating data.

Activation	Activation includes (a) preparing project teams to deliver engagement and (b) promoting engagement activities to community. The implementation plan will identify what actions need to take place in this phase (e.g. coordinate venues, liaise with key stakeholders, distribute promotional materials) **Questions to consider:** ☐ Do staff (a) understand their role and responsibilities in delivering engagement and (b) have the resources required to undertake engagement activities? ☐ Do community know (a) what the engagement is about (b) when and where engagement will take place and (c) how to participate?
Delivery and monitoring	Engagement delivery should involve ongoing monitoring to ensure activities align with objectives, resourcing, and required outputs. Activities may need to be adapted or refined, or additional processes may need to be included. **Questions to consider:** ☐ Are project and activity objectives being achieved? ☐ Are attendance numbers/participation rates meeting expectations? ☐ What is the level of participant diversity? Is anybody *not* participating who might want or need to? ☐ Do engagement outputs meet data requirements? ☐ Are outputs being appropriately collected and documented? ☐ What is the public/media response if any? ☐ Are there enough/appropriate resources to continue?
Analysis	Raw outputs collected during engagement are to be collated and analysed to report on findings, make recommendations and/or inform decision-making (as determined by the level of engagement). **Questions to consider:** ☐ What were the key themes and/or findings across all engagement activities? ☐ What additional insights were discovered? *To protect the privacy of participants, data is to be de-identified unless express consent is given to the sharing of personal details.

Attachment 1

4. Close the loop

Reviewing, evaluating and reporting on engagement is critical to promoting transparency, accountability and integrity in engagement processes. This stage involves preparing and delivering **engagement reports** for decision-makers, project delivery teams and the community.

Report	The engagement report documents the entire engagement process, from design to data analysis, and presents engagement findings and insights. It may make recommendations or guide next steps. The report is shared with project teams, decision-makers and the community. Engagement reports will generally be included within Council reports. For ease of access, summaries will also be made publicly available for community and other stakeholders to view. **Questions to consider:** ☐ Who participated in the engagement and how? ☐ What did stakeholders say? (themes, findings, insights) ☐ How stakeholder input was used in the decision-making process? ☐ What other evidence was considered?
Review	An engagement review is undertaken as part of continuous improvement. It evaluates the effectiveness of engagement processes, activities, outcomes and resourcing, among other factors. This report is shared internally with engagement teams to reflect and debrief on learnings.

Continuous communication

For best outcomes, community should be kept informed as engagement activities progress. Continuous communication serves to manage expectations and improve trust by ensuring the engagement process is open and transparent. How continuous communication is implemented will depend on the level, scale and timeframe for engagement, and will be embedded into engagement planning.

Methods may include:
- Sharing of engagement schedules, objectives and agendas
- Acknowledging and thanking community for their time and input
- Feeding back to participants after each engagement activity (sense checking)
- Preparing interim reports at key delivery milestones
- Providing regular updates online (web, social media, email), in print (newsletter, newspaper), or in person (briefings)
- Providing additional information/communications if needed
- Providing channels for community to get in touch
- Responding to community questions or inquiries in a timely manner

Appendix 1: Community Engagement Schedule

Council is committed to engaging the community and stakeholders on decisions that affect them, and meeting people where they are to engage with a diversity of voices. Community pop-ups, where Council staff are stationed at various high-traffic locations across the Municipality during peak times, offer a casual setting for residents to chat with Council staff throughout the year.

These events are typically scheduled for the week following an Ordinary Council meeting, which occurs on the third Tuesday of the month. This timing allows community members to provide input on plans, policies, and strategies that have been placed on public exhibition or opened for consultation. This schedule will be complemented by online engagement opportunities and targeted stakeholder-holder engagement activities, such as workshops, focus groups and meetings with committees and community groups.

Month	Township	Location	Date	Time
July	Kiama	Kiama Topshop	Wed 24 Jul	9am - 11am
	Jamberoo	Jamberoo Football Club	Thu 25 Jul	3pm - 5pm
Aug	Note: No pop-ups due to the local government election caretaker period			
September	Minnamurra CRC – Waste Depot	Household Bulky Waste Event	Sat 14 Sep (Election Day)	8am - 4pm
	Minnamurra CRC – Waste Depot	Household Bulky Waste Event	Sun 15 Sep	8am - 4pm
October	Kiama	Kiama Library	Tue 30 Oct	10am - 12pm
	Kiama Downs	Oztag, Gainsborough Oval	Wed 31 Oct	4pm - 6pm
November	Kiama	Kiama Leisure Centre	Thu 28 Nov	3pm - 6pm
	Gerringong	Gerringong IGA	Fri 29 Nov	3pm - 5pm
December	Kiama	Kiama Farmers Market	Wed 18 Dec	3pm - 6pm
	Kiama	Alchemy Chorus, Uniting Church	Thu 19 Dec	10am-12pm
January	Kiama	Kiama Show	Fri 24 Jan	8pm - 4pm
	Jamberoo	Jamberoo Pool	Thu 30 Jan	3pm - 5pm
February	Kiama	Kiama Blue Haven	Tue 25 Feb	10am - 12pm
	Kiama Downs	Kiama Downs IGA	Thu 27 Feb	3pm - 5pm
March	Minnamurra CRC – Waste Depot	Household Bulky Waste Event	TBC	8am - 4pm
	Minnamurra CRC – Waste Depot	Household Bulky Waste Event	TBC	8am - 4pm
April	Kiama	Kiama Woolworths	Tue 29 Apr	5pm - 7pm
	Gerringong	Gerringong Library	Wed 30 Apr	10am - 12pm
May	Kiama	AFL training, Bonaira Oval	Tue 27 May	3pm - 5pm
	Gerringong	Uniting Mayflower	Wed 28 May	10am-12pm
June	Kiama	Kiama Farmers Market	Wed 25 Jun	2pm – 5pm
	Jamberoo	Jamberoo IGA	Thu 26 Jun	4pm – 6pm

Note[1]: We will review and adjust this pop-up schedule throughout the year to ensure it remains effective and continues to meet community where they are.

Note[2]: Saturdays and Sundays are actively avoided if alternative options are available during the week due to Council budget limitations.

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Appendix 2: Evaluation Metrics

1. Build staff capacity

Actions	Measure	Target	Timeline
1. Provide IAP2 training to managers and other relevant staff.	No. of staff provided with IAP2 training	4 staff until all relevant staff are qualified	Yearly ongoing – as staff turnover and require refresher training
2. Develop a Community Engagement Toolkit that includes planning and reporting templates to support staff and standardise engagement across the organisation.	Development of Community engagement toolkit No. of staff utilising the toolkit/no. of engagements	Complete toolkit 80% of engagements	2024-25 Yearly
3. Identify and train "Engagement Champions" across Council teams to support the work of Council's Communications and Engagement Team.	No. of champions identified and trained	4 staff in line with above action	Yearly
4. Provide embedded community engagement training into staff onboarding, and ongoing professional development, to ensure all staff understand Council's commitment to best-practice engagement.	Development of community engagement training module No. of staff completed community engagement onboarding training	Complete training module 20% of new recruits	2025-26 Yearly
5. Develop an approvals process to ensure engagement processes meet internal, legislative and accessibility requirements.	Development of approval process	Complete of the approval process	February 2025

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2. Meet community where they are

Actions	Measure	Target	Timeline
1. Clearly communicate and promote engagement opportunities through various mediums, e.g. local newspapers, regular Council e-newsletters, Council website, Council social media, rates notice, etc.	Promotion of engagement opportunities incl. mediums and reach	TBC based on baseline	Continuously
2. Offer a range of face-to-face, online and paper-based engagement opportunities for people to engage with Council decisions in various ways.	Offering a mix of face-to-face, online and paper-based engagement opportunities	Where suitable or required Demonstrate a mix of	Continuously
3. Develop an Engagement Schedule to streamline engagement across the organisation and meet community where they are.	Development of Engagement Schedule	Engagement Schedule created No. of community members engaged	Included in this Strategy, to be reviewed yearly
4. Explore digital engagement platforms to enhance accessibility and broaden community reach, including online polls that provide feedback by design.	Develop a business case for the acquisition of a Digital Engagement Platform. Implementation and uptake of Digital Engagement Platform	Business case completion + implementation	2025-26
5. Build on existing community networks and identify community champions to drive engagement with communities of place, identity, interest and need.	Develop and maintain a stakeholder map for internal use	Completion, regular review	Review yearly
6. Collaborate with youth and other underrepresented groups to co-design and implement engagement activities that are relevant and accessible to them.	No. of co-design engagements Strengthen the diversity of voices	TBC based on baseline	Continuously

3. Close the loop

Actions	Measure	Target	Timeline
1. Develop processes to close the loop in a variety of ways, including Council reporting, website, email, social media and other mediums, with a focus on explaining how and when community feedback was considered in the decision-making process.	Develop processes to close the loop sufficiently on engagement activities Evaluation of the effectiveness of the process based on sentiment	Development of process TBC based on baseline	2024-2025 2025-2026
2. Continually develop and improve Council's community engagement practises and capacity through regular review and evaluation.	Review and evaluate engagement activities	Review with relevant departments	June 2025
3. Assess engagement activities' effectiveness against the Strategy's principles and the diversity, equity and inclusion objectives.	Review and evaluate engagement activities	TBC based on baseline	Yearly
4. Monitor community sentiment via a range of mediums e.g. social media monitoring, a demographic "community satisfaction" survey of Kiama Municipality, feedback from workshops, community events, committees and community groups.	Undertaking of a demographic "community satisfaction" survey	Completion of survey	2025-2026

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Authorisation and version control

Owner/Responsible Officer	Manager Communications & Engagement
Department	Office of CEO
Date adopted/endorsed	TBC
Resolution number (if applicable)	TBC
Next review date	By 31 December 2024
TRIM reference	TBC

Variation and review

The Strategy should be reviewed within 3 months of the local government elections as part of the broader review of the Community Strategic Plan.

Date reviewed	Date adopted/ endorsed	Brief detail of amendments
December 2015	March 2016	New Strategy
May 2023		Exhibited draft Strategy, withdrawn as required additional work
April 2024		Reworked, redrafted Strategy

Council reserves the right to review, vary or revoke this Strategy.

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Attachment 1

KIAMA MUNICIPAL COUNCIL
your council. your community

Your community,
your say

A vibrant diversity of voices

Community Engagement Report
Your community, your say
Phase 1: Consultation (co-design)
13 March – 2 April 2024

Acknowledgement of Country

Kiama Municipal Council acknowledges the Wodi Wodi people on Dharawal country as the traditional custodians of the land on which our Municipality is located. We pay our respects to Elders past, present and future. We are committed to honouring Australian Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples' unique cultural and spiritual relationships to the land, waters and seas and their rich contribution to our community.

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This page image: Kiama Council Australia Day 2024 activities. Peter Izzard Photography

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Attachment 2

Introduction

This report presents the results of the co-design phase of the community engagement consultation to draft Kiama Municipal Council's Community Engagement Strategy.

Kiama Council is committed to developing a culture of meaningful community engagement to achieve better and more sustainable outcomes for the municipality. Insights from the co-design consultation are used to re-draft the Community Engagement Strategy as a practical framework for Council to engage with diverse voices across our community, businesses and other stakeholders in a meaningful and measurable way. It will also form actions for delivery that will be commitments made to our community through our Integrated Planning and Reporting Framework – namely the delivery program and operational plan.

Our engagement with community on the draft Strategy does not end here. During the exhibition process, we will continue to gather feedback and actively engage with stakeholders, including but not limited to youth, First Nations groups, the business community and more.

Who we engaged

A series of engagement activities were delivered in early 2024 to guide the development of the Strategy.

Community consultation	Staff consultation
• Spoke to 160+ individuals and handed out flyers to more than 1,000 people at community pop-ups across eight locations in our Municipality • Met with various committees and stakeholder groups, including: o Kiama High Student Representative Council o Kiama Area Precincts Alliance o Liveability and Infrastructure Committee o Sustainable Communities Committee • Received 240+ "Your community, your say" survey responses	• Organised a workshop with Councillors • Facilitated a cross-departmental staff workshop with 29 participants • Received 20+ responses to the Council staff survey • Conducted interviews with executives and key staff members

What we heard – summary

Internal: want Council to engage by
- building staff capacity and providing practical tools
- making engagement meaningful and seeking diversity of voices
- closing the loop – communicating outcomes and delivering on commitments
- meeting the community where they are, building trust
- however, note that time and resources are significant barriers to overcome

Community: want Council to
- improve how they follow-up with people on outcomes and decisions
- be clear and transparent about processes, timelines and level of community influence
- reach a greater variety of people by meeting them where they are
- engage more with youth and other communities of need
- be more visible and listen

Receive Council information
1. Local newspapers (56%)
2. Regular e-newsletter (42%)
3. Council website (41%),
4. Council's Facebook page (41%)
5. Brochures in letterbox (38%).

Provide Council with input
1. Filling out a survey (64%),
2. Writing a letter or email (48%),
3. Quick online polls (44%)
4. Talking to council staff (37%)
5. Online forums (26%)

Engage on
1. Town planning and development (65%)
2. Opportunities to provide feedback on Council projects etc (48%)
3. Environment and land/coastal management (35%)
4. Parks, venues, playgrounds, recreational facilities etc (34%)
5. Roadworks and infrastructure (26%)

"It sounds like you're asking the right questions"

"We love the village atmosphere, we want to keep our open spaces"

"In 52 years in the area, there's been lots of change!"

"Progress can be qualitative not quantitative"

"Youth are often not interested in engaging with council, too busy with other things!"

"Council needs to repair the community's trust before it can move forward"

"Ratepayers are looking for outcomes, not more talk"

"You can reach young parents at the gym, pre-schools, Leisure centre and daycares"

"Growth is OK but we need the infrastructure to support it"

"Council needs to close the loop and be transparent"

"If we spend time making a submission, we really want to know how our input has made a difference"

Detailed consultation insights

Kiama Council Executive and key staff interviews

Interviewees were supportive of improving Council's community engagement efforts, and expressed a desire to make engagement more meaningful, seeking a diversity of voices, 'meeting community where they are' and reducing focus on the minority of 'loud voices' who can dominate.

Capacity and resourcing were seen as key issues across all departments and teams. A desire to build staff capacity was expressed, with interviewees eager to build their skills and knowledge, particularly around 'closing-the-loop' on engagement projects. Tools and templates were frequently mentioned to deliver consistent engagement throughout Council.

Communication was seen as an area for significant improvement, with a desire to provide community with timely information about Council activities – from both strategic and day-to-day operations perspectives. While innovation and creativity was welcomed, it was noted that the Community Engagement Strategy should provide a practical framework that allows Council to plan and deliver engagement activities with the resources they currently have.

Staff and Councillor workshops

Findings from the staff and Councillor workshops indicate a desire to engage with a diverse cross-section of community, and to be proactive in 'meeting community where they are'. To do this, building capacity within Council and in the community was seen as essential. For Council, this means having tools and templates to effectively plan, implement and close the loop on engagement. For community, this means being provided with the right information and knowing how they can get involved.

However, time and resourcing were seen as significant barriers to undertaking meaningful two-way engagement, with staff commenting that the substantial prep work required to deliver activities was disruptive to project delivery timeframes. Additionally, engagement fatigue was highlighted as a potential issue within the small community. With this in mind, staff highlighted the need to ask community how they want be engaged by Council and what topics/issues they are most interested in.

Relationship building was seen as necessary to improving the community's trust in Council. Clarity and transparency were seen as essential, especially with regards to what community can and can't influence. When considering the strategy itself, a simple, high-level document was preferred, utilising visual communication such as flowcharts and process maps as opposed to lists and heavy text.

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Council committees and KAPA meetings

Attendees are highly active, articulate and engaged on Council matters and indicated a desire for more information to be shared, a willingness and expectation to be consulted on Council decisions and a general wish for increased transparency around how Council decisions are made and enacted.

'Closing the loop' was a common theme – with many participants expressing frustration that their feedback, questions or suggestions could sometimes to 'disappear'- eg: a lack of updates or outcomes of consultations and/or not being notified of results (having to search Council website or business papers themselves, rather than receiving an email or phone call or in-person update), or not receiving a reply email or follow-up call to an enquiry.

The idea of creating a 'Kiama 100' representative group was highly approved by some, others had reservations.

Some of the Precinct and Association (P&A) office-bearers are dissatisfied with their minutes no longer being in Council's business papers and would like their groups to be promoted by Council as a conduit for community views. Council has advised these meeting minutes can be published on the Precincts and Associations' own websites with a link from Council's site.

P&A members felt their organisations have a role in directing locale-based matters to Council and therefore wanted a strategy that recognises the different needs of different locations.

It was also recognised that the P&As not representative of the whole community and are struggling to attract new and younger members to their groups.

Committees expressed a willingness and interest in being more 'useful' and asked: "What can we do".

Council staff reiterated that, while the P&As and committees are a valued part of our community engagement mix, we are looking to increase the diversity of voices and reach out to those who are less-often heard.

Youth consultation

Kiama Council's Community Hubs Manager, Youth Worker, and Community Engagement Officer engaged with Kiama High School's Student Representative Council (SRC) to discuss effective methods of involving youth in important topics such as growth and housing.

The meeting's insights emphasised that young people have busy lives and a lot on their plates; meeting them where they are and integrating engagement activities within existing commitments works well, eg: as part of a school term/period. Clear communication about the purpose, level of influence and outcomes of engagement activities are crucial. Graphic recording of workshops was highlighted as a great and interactive way to achieve this.

Several recommendations were put forward, including tailoring discussion topics to align with youth interests and leveraging tools like sticky notes for anonymous contributions, creative mediums, and interactive games. Drawing from past successful experiences like the 2022 Housing and Recreation & Outdoor Spaces Youth Workshop, the group emphasised providing clear instructions, fostering interactive sessions, and facilitating connections between participants and local leaders, such as the mayor, councillors and staff. Furthermore, there was a suggestion to incorporate a career-oriented perspective and focus on themes like the future, sustainability, and environmental awareness to enhance engagement among young audiences.

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SRC students also expressed an interest in co-designing and leading engagement activities for their peers. Engaging young people can be used as an avenue to reach their often-busy parents.

Your community, your say – Community survey

Our public survey was open from 13 to 28 March. It asked how our community members (and/or groups/businesses/organisations) wanted to engage with Council and, how they wanted Council to engage with them.

The survey had around 250 responses (approximately representative of 1% of the population of Kiama LGA) via digital and on-paper. The largest group of respondents were aged 65-84 (38%) followed by age 55-64 (19%), 45-54 (17%) and 35-44 (16%), however we received responses in all age brackets, including respondents aged under 18 and 85+.

Community Engagement Survey results
Demographics

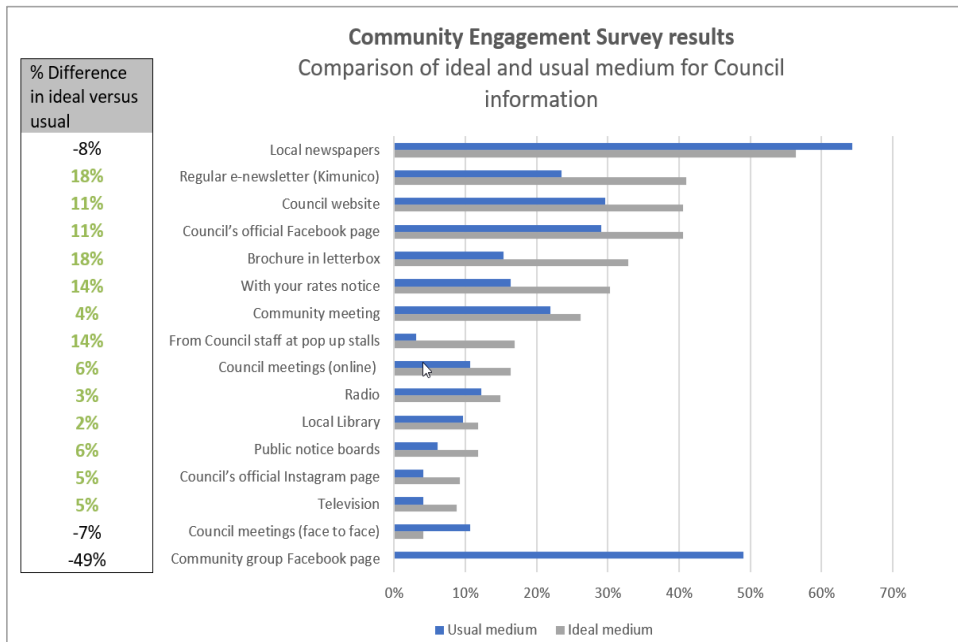| Category	%
Long-term resident (10+ years)	~60%
Retiree	~35%
Working full-time	~28%
Regular volunteer	~21%
Working part-time / casual	~19%
Medium-term resident (3 to 9 years)	~15%
Parent with young kids (under 12)	~15%
Parent with teenagers at home (under 18)	~14%
New resident (< 3 years)	~8%
Local business owner	~6%
Other (please specify)	~5%
Person with a disability	~4%
Student	~3%
Providing feedback on behalf of a group or...	~3%
Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander	~3%
LGBTQIA+	~3%
Non-English speaking background	~2%
None of the above	~2%

Demographics: The largest cohort had lived in the Kiama Municipality for 10+ years (60%). 35% of respondents were retirees, 28% working full time, 19% work part time and 21% regularly volunteer, with 6% of respondents identifying as a local business owner. Around 4% of survey respondents identified as living with a disability, 3% identified as LGBTQIA+ and 3% as Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander. Please note that people could identify themselves as multiple categories in this question. (see demographics graph page 9).

Resident breakdown: the largest number of respondents lived in Kiama township (40%), followed by 15% in Jamberoo, 15.5% Kiama Downs and 8% Gerringong, with responders also from Foxground, Gerroa, Jerrara, Kiama Heights, Minnamurra and Saddleback Mountain.

Top 5 topics people want to engage on:
1. Town planning and Development (65%)
2. Opportunities to provide feedback on Council projects etc (48%)
3. Environment and land/coastal management (35%)
4. Parks, venues, playgrounds, recreational facilities etc (34%)
5. Roadworks & Infrastructure (26%)

Community Engagement Survey results
Comparison of ideal and usual medium for Council information

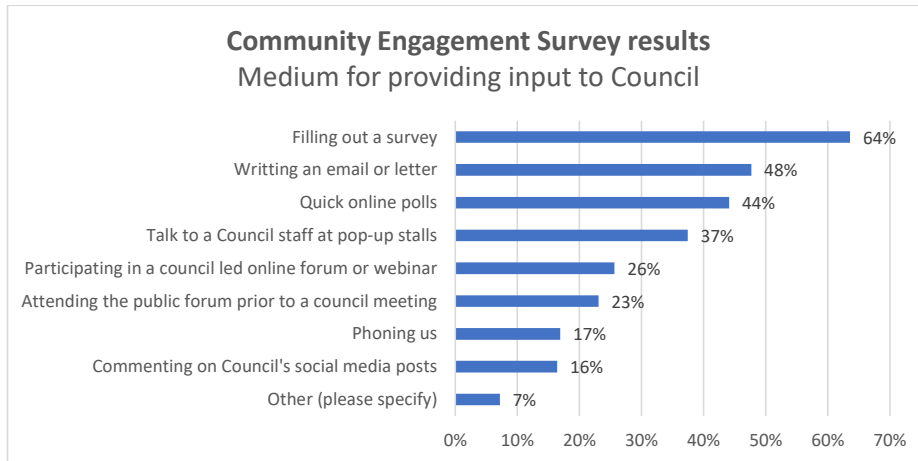| % Difference in ideal versus usual	Medium
-8%	Local newspapers
18%	Regular e-newsletter (Kimunico)
11%	Council website
11%	Council's official Facebook page
18%	Brochure in letterbox
14%	With your rates notice
4%	Community meeting
14%	From Council staff at pop up stalls
6%	Council meetings (online)
3%	Radio
2%	Local Library
6%	Public notice boards
5%	Council's official Instagram page
5%	Television
-7%	Council meetings (face to face)
-49%	Community group Facebook page

■ Usual medium   ■ Ideal medium

The most common methods respondents get their information on Council happenings is from local newspapers (64%), community groups on Facebook (49%), the Council website (30%), Council's official Facebook page (29%) and Council's e-newsletter Kimunico (23%).
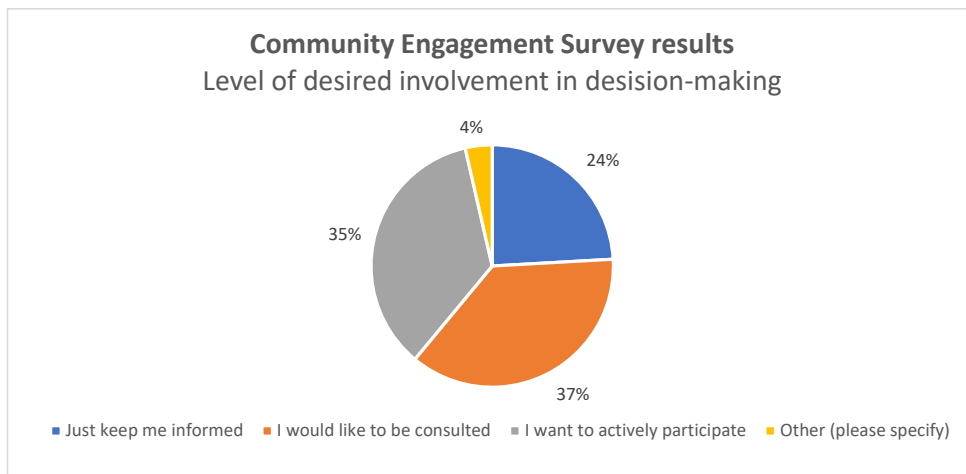
The preferred mediums for receiving Council information include local newspapers (56%) (note: 'local' was not defined), regular e-newsletter (42%), Council website (41%), Council's official Facebook page (41%) and brochures in letterbox (38%). This data guides Council to prioritise these mediums to engage with community, noting time and budgetary constraints.

While 42% indicated a preference for regular e-newsletters, only 18% said they were currently subscribed, with comparable figures for interest/ update of brochures in letterboxes, indicating these could be areas for improvement. It is also worth flagging that Council includes a flyer with its quarterly rates notice as standard (sent via email or post, depending on preference of each individual ratepayer) The survey itself resulted in an additional 40+ subscribers to Council's monthly Kimunico e-newsletter.
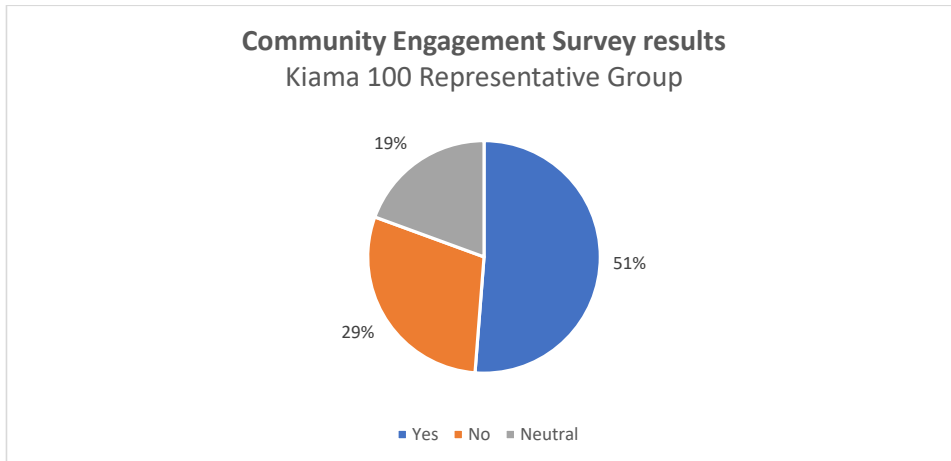
While Community Group Facebook pages are well utilised (49%) to access Council information, they are not officially managed by Council and hence were not included as an ideal option. However, Council has good contacts with the administrators of these pages, and information is regularly replicated and shared via these channels.

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Community Engagement Survey results
Medium for providing input to Council

Medium	%
Filling out a survey	64%
Writting an email or letter	48%
Quick online polls	44%
Talk to a Council staff at pop-up stalls	37%
Participating in a council led online forum or webinar	26%
Attending the public forum prior to a council meeting	23%
Phoning us	17%
Commenting on Council's social media posts	16%
Other (please specify)	7%

Most survey respondents indicated they would like to tell Council their thoughts by filling out a survey (64%), writing a letter or email (48%), quick online polls or talking to council staff (37%). This data will guide the Council in prioritising these channels to engage with the community. Overall feedback (incl. comments provided in "Other" option) highlighted a desire for Council to provide a combination of online and in-person engagement methods.

Community Engagement Survey results
Level of desired involvement in desision-making

- Just keep me informed — 24%
- I would like to be consulted — 37%
- I want to actively participate — 35%
- Other (please specify) — 4%

The majority (72%) of survey respondents were interested in being involved in Council's decision-making. The Strategy highlights a variety of methods and tools for the community to be involved and participate in decision-making. It's also important for Council to make clear to community how much influence they can have on each decision, to manage expectations and avoid negative backlash.

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Community Engagement Survey results
Kiama 100 Representative Group

■ Yes ■ No ■ Neutral

More than half of survey respondents (51%) supported the Kiama 100 initiative, which aims to capture the diversity of voices within our community.

Opponents (29%) raised concerns regarding the feasibility of establishing such a group, its adequacy in representing the full spectrum of community voices, exclusion of community experts, risk of vested interests, and the resource-intensive nature of focusing solely on 100 voices. Council will consider this concept in more detail once the Community Engagement Strategy is endorsed

Key findings overall on how Council can engage more meaningfully with the diversity of voices in the community include:
- Meeting community where they are eg: at school, pre-schools, markets
- Clear and consistent in engagement
- Close the loop to ensure community feels heard and valued
- Don't pander to minorities/noisy complainers
- Use more innovative engagement tools
- Increasing visibility and actively listening to community feedback.

A further breakdown of survey results will be included in the engagement report when the Strategy is finalised.
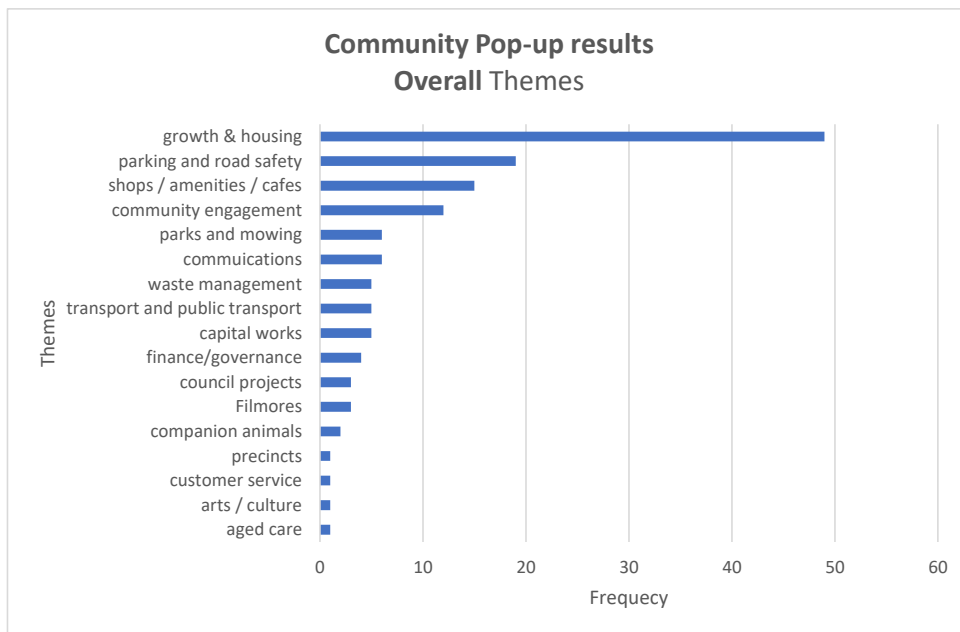
Community pop-ups

Council staff reached more than 1,000 residents, including holding in-depth conversations with around 160 people across the Municipality at our Household Bulky Waste event and community pop-ups.

The community pop-ups were held outside Kiama Downs/Gainsborough Foodworks, Kiama Downs IGA, Minnamurra Café, Jamberoo IGA, Gerringong IGA, Gerroa General Store and Kiama Farmers Market and were timed for maximum foot traffic on Friday and Saturday to ensure a good reach across our various localities and to reach people where they were, many of whom do not have the time or inclination to get in touch with Council otherwise.

Although not able to deeply engage with everyone, those who were handed flyers were given a brief introduction to explain Council is developing Community Engagement and Growth & Housing strategies and encouraged to take the online survey.
Many expressed appreciation at seeing Council "out and about" and engaging in these discussions. Council's Community Engagement team is keen to make these a regular occurrence and will look to include pop-ups as part of engagement planning and schedules going forward.

Below is a table indicating the main themes discussed with members of the public at our community pop-ups and Household Bulky Waste event. Where possible, feedback will be disseminated to the relevant decision-makers for their information and deliberation.

Community Pop-up results
Overall Themes

Below is a table indicating the sub-themes within the Community Engagement realm discussed with members of the public at our community pop-ups and Household Bulky Waste event.

Community Pop-up Resulst
Community Engagement Results
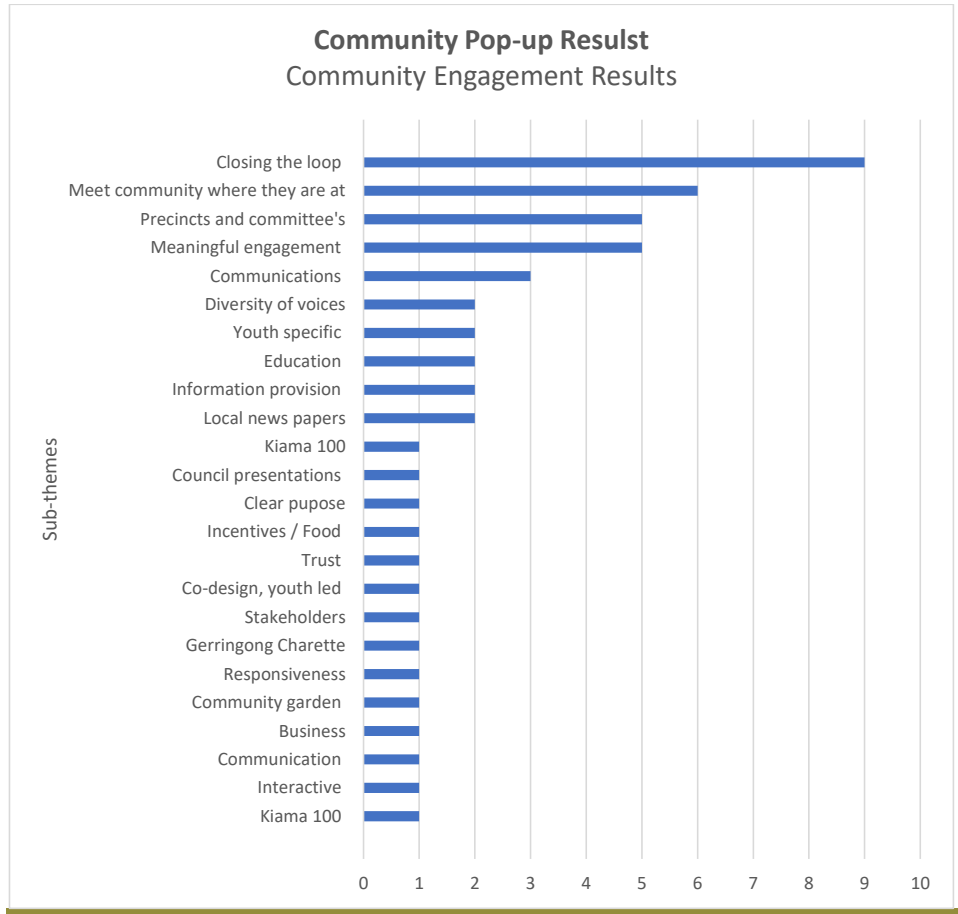
The feedback gained during the phase 1/ co-design period has provided a range of insights that were considered when developing the Draft Community Engagement Strategy. These insights will also form the basis of the development and improvement of Council's Community Engagement Toolkit, templates and future engagement activities.

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Next steps

The Draft Strategy was endorsed by Council for public exhibition at its Ordinary Meeting on 16 April 2024 as follows:

Resolution 24/097OC.
Resolved that Council:
1. Endorse the draft Community Engagement Strategy for public exhibition for a period of 28 days.
2. Note if submissions are received during the exhibition period a further report, including an engagement report will be provided on any proposed amendments to the Strategy.
3. Adopt the Community Engagement Strategy if no submissions are received, on the day after the completion of the public exhibition period. (Councillors Larkins and Draisma)

Next steps

1. **Public exhibition of draft strategy**
   The Draft Strategy has been placed on public exhibition for 28 days until 17 May 2024. Council staff will continue to actively engage during the exhibition period with stakeholders including but not limited to youth, First Nations groups, the business community and more. This will provide community and stakeholders with another opportunity to have their say.
2. **Consideration feedback**
   Feedback and insights from the exhibition period will be collected and collated alongside data already gathered during the co-design period to further refine the Strategy.
3. **Council endorsement**
   The final Strategy will be reported back to Council for adoption, including a Community Engagement Report outlining how feedback received during the consultation phases shaped and informed the Strategy.
4. **Post Local Government Elections review**
   Council will be asked to once again review the Community Engagement Strategy. It is hoped that, given all the hard work that is going into the Strategy now, this process can be streamlined and will take the form of a minor review, thus freeing the new Council to direct their focus to high-level strategic documents such as the Community Strategic Plan and important and pressing matters such as Council's ongoing Performance Improvement Order.

Have your say:

https://www.kiama.nsw.gov.au/Council/Your-say/Community-Engagement-Strategy

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Appendix 1: Survey Results

See: Survey Results – Your community, your say.

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Appendix 2: Summary of engagement activities

Date	Event	Reach	Engaged
Phase 1: consultation - Co-design			
29- Feb	Your community your say Project page	879	
29-Feb	Press release: "Growth and Community Engagement" on Council website, distributed to media lists.	959	
29-Feb	Social media schedule launched of 8 posts		
13 March	Launch of "your community, your say" survey – online and paper versions		242
13-Mar	Infrastructure & Liveability Committee – workshop		7
14-Mar	Flyers printed and handed out, and available at Council's Administration Centre and Libraries.	1000	
14-17 March	Council staff at Household Bulky Waste event engaging with community and handing out flyers	520	50
22-Mar	Community pop-ups at Kiama Downs - FoodWorks	100	20
22-Mar	Community pop-ups at Kiama Downs - IGA	30	10
22-Mar	Meeting with Precincts and Associations (KAPA)	40	9
23-Mar	Community pop-ups at Minnamurra	20	5
23-Mar	Community pop-ups at Jamberoo	50	20
23-Mar	Community pop-ups at Gerringong	200	25
23-Mar	Community pop-ups at Gerroa	2	
26-Mar	Sustainable Communities Committee – workshop		7
27-Mar	Community pop-ups at Farmers Market	50	25
2-Apr	Meeting with Kiama High School SRC students		16
	Total	**2848**	**429**

KIAMA MUNICIPAL COUNCIL
your council. your community

Your community, *your say*

A vibrant diversity of voices

Community Engagement Report
Your community, your say
Phase 2: Consultation – Public Exhibition
17 April – 17 May 2024

Acknowledgement of Country

Kiama Municipal Council acknowledges the Wodi Wodi people on Dharawal country as the traditional custodians of the land on which our Municipality is located. We pay our respects to Elders past, present and future. We are committed to honouring Australian Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples' unique cultural and spiritual relationships to the land, waters and seas and their rich contribution to our community.

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Image: Kiama Council Australia Day 2024 by Peter Izzard Photograph

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Introduction

This report presents the results of Phase 2, the Public Exhibition of the draft Community Engagement Strategy (the draft Strategy). Insights from this phase have been used to refine and finalise the Strategy to provide a practical framework for Council to engage with diverse voices across our community, businesses, and other stakeholders in a meaningful and measurable way.

During Phase 1, the Co-design of the Strategy, Council engaged with stakeholders through workshops, pop-ups, and surveys, capturing more than 1,000 interactions. This inclusive approach included staff, Councillors and committees, as well as gathering community feedback through direct interactions with community members in various locations and events throughout our Municipality. Representatives of community groups in the Kiama area, including the Precincts and Associations and Kiama High School students, were also engaged. The Phase 1 Engagement Summary Report is available on our Your Say page.

Who we engaged during Phase 2 (Public Exhibition):

The following engagement activities were undertaken to receive feedback on the draft Strategy during the Public Exhibition.

Community and staff consultation
- The draft Strategy was placed on public exhibition for 28 days from 17 April – 17 May 2024, which was promoted through the usual website and social media channels, as well as emailed to 125+ "Your community, your say" survey participants.
- Staff were updated through the staff newsletter and an intranet news article.
- Promotional posters were distributed across Council buildings in the Municipality, and local community groups were engaged to help spread the word by providing them with posters/flyers to distribute.
- Community pop-ups across four locations in our Municipality during Phase 2 reached around 200 community members, with in-depth engagement with about 60 individuals through conversation and participation in interactive engagement activities. (This builds on the 1,000+ community members and stakeholders reached in Phase 1, co-design).
- Presented and discussed the draft Strategy with Jamberoo Valley Ratepayers & Residents Association.
- Held several disability Inclusion focussed conversations that build on the Disability Inclusion Action Plan (2023-27) consultation findings.
- Observed the effectiveness of interactive youth engagement activities across the libraries, primarily school and high school, reaching around 450 young people.
- Thirteen (13) formal submissions were received.

The planned consultation with the First Nations reference group was unfortunately not able to be undertaken during the exhibition period. Consultation is planned as part of the Strategy review which will occur post-Local Government election (by December 2024).

See Appendix 1 for a summary of all engagement activities undertaken.

What we heard – summary

Staff told us:
- Provide clarity on roles and responsibilities for all stages of community engagement.
- Build staff capacity and provide practical tools.
- Important to consider how much time it takes to effectively plan, design, implement and report on community engagement.
- Continuously evaluate community engagement activities to ensure the program effectively meets community needs.
- Limited resources and budget are significant barriers to overcome.

Community told us:
- Meet community where they are to reach a greater diversity of voices.
- Clearly communicate the purpose of engagement and the extent of community influence on decisions.
- Community pop-ups with relevant staff are a popular, informal and effective way for the community to interact with Council staff.
- Close the loop through follow-up communications that prompt and are tailored to specific audiences, detailing progress, outcomes, and fulfilment of commitments.
- Collaborate with youth and other underrepresented groups to design and implement engagement activities that are relevant and accessible to them.

How people hear from Council:
Multiple mediums, with a preference for:
- Local newspapers (88%)
- Regular e-newsletter (47%)
- Rates notice (41%)
- Council's Facebook page (36%)
- Brochures in letterbox (29%).

Provide Council with input and feedback:
Multiple mediums, with a preference for:
- Filling out a survey (68%),
- Community Pop-ups (65%)
- Writing a letter or email (61%),
- Phoning us (37%)
- Quick online polls (31%)

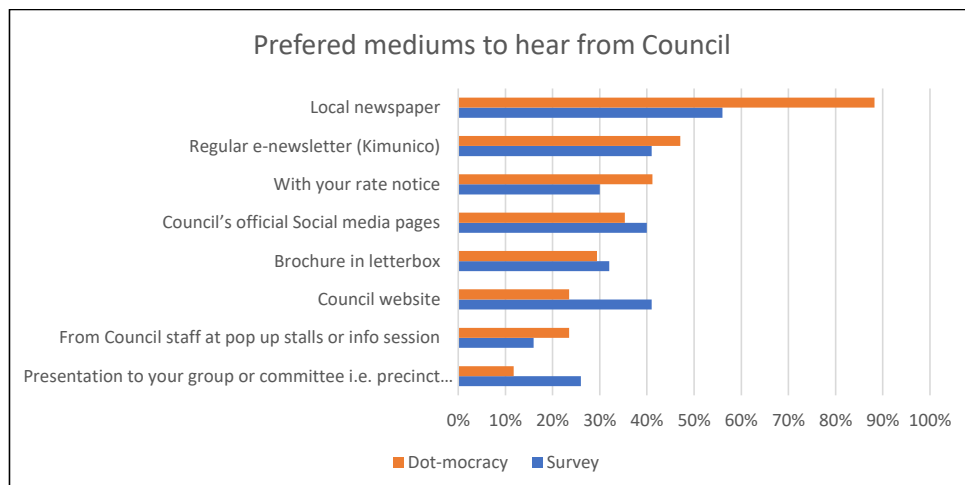# What we heard - detailed consultation insights

Community pop-ups

The community pop-ups were held at various locations, including Kiama Leisure Centre, Kiama Farmers Market, Gerringong Library, and Kiama Library. These events were strategically timed to maximise participation, such as during after-school swimming lessons at the Leisure Centre and early learning activities at the Kiama Library. These pop-ups build on the work Council had already done with nine (10) Community Pop-ups in Phase 1:Co-design of Strategy development, where we reached 1,000+ individuals.

The community responded positively to seeing Council staff actively engaging on the draft Strategy alongside the Growth and Housing Strategy. Overall, the Phase 2 pop-ups reached around 200 additional community members, including in-depth engagement with more than 60 individuals through conversations and participation in engagement activities. These activities included interactive sticky notes and dot-mocracy exercises, allowing participants to consider different aspects of the draft Strategy and provide immediate input. Additionally, participants had the opportunity to make a formal submission.
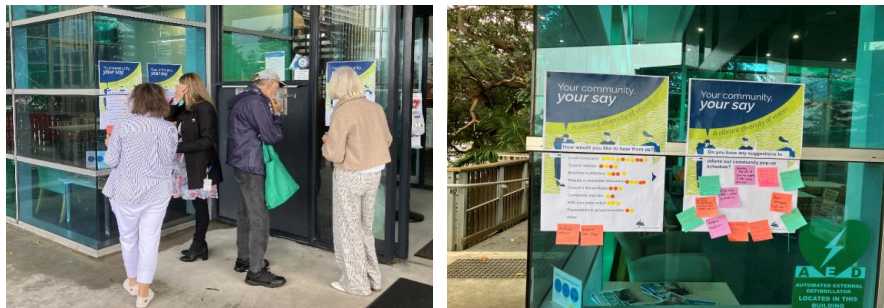

Interactive engagement activities:
Each pop-up included two dot-mocracy activities that asked participants to vote on their preferred mediums regarding "How would you like to hear from Council" and "How would you like to provide input and Feedback to Council".

Prefered mediums to hear from Council

- Local newspaper
- Regular e-newsletter (Kimunico)
- With your rate notice
- Council's official Social media pages
- Brochure in letterbox
- Council website
- From Council staff at pop up stalls or info session
- Presentation to your group or committee i.e. precinct…

0% 10% 20% 30% 40% 50% 60% 70% 80% 90% 100%

■ Dot-mocracy ■ Survey

The results of the dot-mocracy activity on "How community like to hear from Council" mirrored the hierarchy of preferred communication mediums from the Phase 1 survey. Local newspapers were highly favoured at 88%, followed by Council's regular e-newsletter, Kimunico, at 47%, and the rates notice at 41%. A notable difference between the dot-mocracy and survey results was the community's indication that they would not regularly visit Council's website without prompts, such as those provided via social media or the e-newsletter.

Community feedback emphasised a preference for receiving information through multiple mediums, indicating that calls for action need to be seen multiple times and across different platforms for them to act. Council is responsive to all media requests, as per our Media Policy and subsequently receives good coverage in local newspapers. Additionally, community-administered Facebook pages are common sources of local news and information. Although these pages are not administered by Council, and staff have limited influence over the content, Council however maintains good relationships with the administrators of most community pages, and information is regularly shared through these channels.
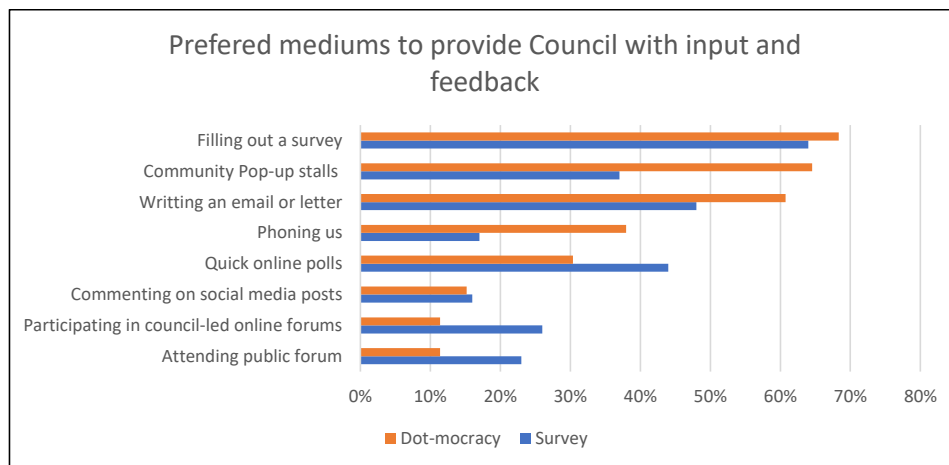
The outcomes of the dot-mocracy activity on "preferred mediums for providing input and feedback to Council" showed a slight adjustment to the hierarchy from the Phase 1 survey results. While filling out a survey remains the most popular medium at 68%, community pop-ups emerged as the second preferred medium at 65%, likely influenced by the positive experiences of those who participated in the pop-ups. This was followed closely by writing an email or letter at 61%.

Like the feedback on receiving information, community input emphasised the need to engage through a combination of face-to-face, online and paper-based opportunities to make participation accessible to all. Additionally, there was a desire for engagement tools that showcased others' opinions to broaden the community's perspective on the diversity of viewpoints and understanding of why decisions are made.

Observations
These were obtained from testing the pop-ups in different locations, the conversations held, and the interactive sticky note activity responses collected during the pop-ups:
- Community pop-ups are an effective way to meet the community where they are and engage with a wide range of community members who don't usually connect with Council. Many participants indicated they found the pop-ups approachable and a unique opportunity to engage with Council.

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- Successfully delivering the pop-ups in conjunction with the Growth and Housing Strategy highlighted the possibility for consolidating engagement efforts on multiple topics.
- Meaningful engagement through pop-ups requires the presence of relevant staff, preferably senior officials or subject-matter experts (SMEs). Connecting the community with SMEs helps rebuild trust with Council and provides relevant staff with valuable insights into community needs, concerns, and aspirations, leading to more sustainable outcomes.
- Attending sporting activities, such as swimming, rugby, football or Oz tag training, is an effective way to reach families with primary-school age children. This was evidenced by a spike in survey responses from that demographic after hosting a pop-up at the Kiama Leisure Centre. Using pre-loaded iPads for surveys or online polls can further enhance engagement with this stakeholder segment.
- Community members emphasised the importance of timely information about upcoming pop-ups and spreading events across different townships to ensure a diversity of perspectives on local issues and differing voices are captured.
- Many community members raised non-engagement-related concerns or enquiries during the pop-ups, highlighting that this process could be an opportunity to capture and address additional Council-related issues. Common topics included grass mowing, parking, maintenance, safety issues, and resource distribution.
- The community's engagement experience is closely tied to the community's perception of Council's responsiveness. While this perception is sometimes influenced by information shared on Facebook groups, community pages, and local gossip, providing confirmation of receipt of communication, expected waiting times, next steps, and keeping the community informed throughout the process is crucial. Response templates will be developed as part of the engagement toolkit to ensure the community is kept in the loop.
- Some community members suggested that Councillors join the pop-ups to provide a direct and approachable opportunity to communicate with elected officials.
- The timing of pop-ups should align with Council meetings to provide the community with a sufficient timeframe for providing input. A duration of two hours for each pop-up was considered ideal by participants and staff hosting.

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Potential location for future pop-ups:

Township	Location	Day	Time	Demographics
All (other than Kiama)	Outside local supermarkets	Any day	Anytime	Mix
Gerringong	Gerringong Markets	3rd Saturday of the month	8:30am - 1:30pm	Mix, including tourists/visitors
Gerringong	Library	timed with early learning activity	10am - 12am	Families with infants and young children + mix
Gerringong	Dementia Dancing, Uniting Age Care Facility	First Friday of each month	10am -12pm	People with a disability and carer
Gerringong	Mayflower, Uniting Age Care Facility	During the week	Between 9 am - 5pm	Older persons, people with a disability and carer
Jamberoo	Jamberoo Football Club	Training days or Saturdays for games (April – September)		Families with young children
Jamberoo	Jamberoo Markets	Last Sunday of every month	8am - 3pm	Mix, including tourists/visitors
Jamberoo	Pool	From Dec	3pm - 5pm	TBC
Kiama	Farmers Market	Wednesdays	2pm -4pm	Families with young children, retirees + Mix
Kiama	Woolworths	Any day	Anytime	Mix
Kiama	Topshop	During the week	Anytime	Mix
Kiama	Leisure Centre	During the week	3pm - 5pm	Families with young children
Kiama	Main street / Old Fire Station Gallery	During the week	9am - 5pm	Mix, including tourists/visitors
Kiama	Library	timed with early learning activity	9:30am - 11:30am	Families with infants and young children + mix
Kiama	Blue Haven Bonaira and Terralong	During the week	9am - 5pm	Retirees, older persons, people with a disability and carers
Kiama	Rugby League, Kiama Showgrounds	Training days or Saturdays for games (April – September)	Afternoon/ Morning	Families with school-age children
Kiama	AFL, Bonaira Oval	Training days or Sundays for games (April – September)	Afternoon/ Morning	Families with school-age children s
Kiama	Community Transport	During the week	9am - 5pm	Older persons, people with a disability and carer
Kiama	Alchemy Chorus Uniting Church	Every Thursday	10am – 12pm	People with a disability and carer
Kiama Downs	Oz tag, Gainsborough Oval	Tuesday / Wednesday afternoons (October – March)	4pm - 6pm	Families with school-age children

Note: Due to budget limitations, Council staff will generally avoid scheduling pop-ups on Saturdays and Sundays when alternative options are available during the week.

Youth Engagement:

Young people are the future of our region, and it is important that they have the opportunity to shape that future. Building on the learnings from the youth engagement focus group undertaken with the SRC representative student from Kiama High School during Phase 1, the following engagement activities are considered from an observational and reflective lens to identify an effective engagement approach to encourage youth participation. It was decided not to combine the engagements to avoid potential confusion for the young participants.

Pre-school-aged children

Council staff from the Strategic Planning, Community Engagement and Library teams installed an interactive activity station at both Gerringong and Kiama Libraries from 16 April to 31 May to engage children in thoughts around growth and housing. The interactive set-up included cardboard houses that could be decorated and drawing sheets prompting children to draw or write about what makes our community special (beyond their family and pets) and what would make this town an amazing place to live in 20 years.

Although the constructive feedback from the children was limited, the activity successfully engaged young children and sparked conversation amongst the parents and caregivers who were, through the activity, informed of the project and encouraged to complete the available survey.

Primary school

Council staff from the Strategic Planning, Community Engagement and Community Hubs teams facilitated an interactive workshop to engage primary school-aged youth, specifically about 90 students from Years 5 and 6 at St Peter & Paul Catholic Primary School. The workshop began with an overview of the role of local government and an introduction to town planning. Following this, the students participated in two hands-on activities designed to gather their insights and ideas.

The first activity provided aerial maps of suburb and village areas, asking, 'What do you like about the Kiama LGA?'. The students were given three sticky notes to write down their thoughts and place them on the map. A total of 324 responses were received, demonstrating the effectiveness of this activity. It ensured that everyone could write down their thoughts anonymously, allowing quieter or more reserved students to share their ideas without the pressure of speaking in front of the group. Students also actively reflected on their peers' responses, stimulating further discussion.

The next activity focused on 'What does the Kiama LGA look like in the future?' and the students got to be town planners for a day. They were provided with a map of a new greenfield site and, together in small groups, designed a new town that included visual representations and written words. The students enjoyed the activity's creative process, allowing them to express their imagination and ideas while working together towards a common goal.

Overall, this interactive workshop was a great way to meet the young people where they are, empower students to take an active interest in their community's future and spark conversations beyond the school boundary.

"Thank you for this initiative. It started a great conversation at home with my son about our community. He felt really engaged." Parent of Participant, SS Peter & Paul Catholic Primary School, Kiama

High School
Council staff from the Strategic Planning, Community Engagement and Community Hubs teams, together with students from the Student Representative Council (SRC), facilitated 10 workshops over 2 days which were attended by about 200 students from Years 9, 10, 11 and 12, including a Specialist Support class.

The Workshop included a brief introduction to the role of Council, the aim and objectives of the engagement, an online game of Kahoots to warm up, 3 activities and some practical time at the end for building Lego houses. Using a diverse and interactive mix of learning, competitive, practical, and personal-based activities worked well, and effectively kept students interested and engaged. The involvement of SRC students in co-designing and co-facilitating the workshops significantly enhanced engagement levels, indicating a potential for their deeper involvement in future activities.

After delivering the first two workshops, adaptations were made to the run sheet based on feedback from the SRC students, highlighting the importance of agility in responding to participants' needs. The workshop with the Special Support class underscored the necessity for tailored activities, suggesting a need for co-design with teachers and support staff for future engagement. Post-workshop feedback from SRC students emphasised the importance of timely, youth-specific communications to close the engagement loop. This includes sending a thank you email, providing overviews of the next steps, sharing feedback summaries, and organising follow-up activities to review outcomes.

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Looking ahead, there is strong interest from high school teachers, SRC students, and the broader student body in continued engagement activities. Sufficient time should be allocated within the engagement timeline to support the co-design and facilitation together with the SRC students. Additional methods such as vox-pop stands, explanatory videos, and combining face-to-face with online engagements can enrich the process. The collaboration across various departments proved beneficial, though clearer role delineation could improve future efforts.

"*Students liked feeling heard and giving feedback on big issues impacting the community,*" *Gemma, Relieving Head Teacher Wellbeing*

"Our youth are the future of our community, so being heard is something that is very important to today's society. This program has really nurtured youth's voice in a positive manner." Thomas, School Captain

"It was an engaging program for the students to have their opinions on issues in the Kiama LGA heard, and suggest improvements that can be made to benefit young people," Ruby, School Vice-Captain

"An amazing interactive experience, as it allowed the future of the community to have their say on relevant and future issues." Jack, School Vice-Captain

Industry Forum
Council staff from the Strategic Planning, Economic Development and Community Engagement teams hosted an industry forum as part of the Growth and Housing on 12 April, attended by over 60 stakeholders, including builders, developers and building designers. The session included presentations from Council staff, Q&As and round table discussions. Feedback from the round table discussions on Community engagement and notification included:

- Matters interested in including DAs, Council strategies, DCPs etc.
- The preferred medium to receive information includes email, e-newsletter, and social media,
- The preferred medium to provide feedback includes submitting forms, surveys, and open discussions, i.e.: the industry forum.
- To not just listen to the squeaky wheel but hear from the silent majority.

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Jamberoo Valley Ratepayers and Residents Association

Members of the Communication and Engagement team presented at the Jamberoo Valley Ratepayers and Residents Association meeting on 7 May, attended by about 20 community members. The team discussed the development of the draft Strategy and its key themes. This was followed by an interactive session inviting attendees to use Menti to respond to several prepared questions about the draft. Menti proved to be less ideal for the setting, which resulted in opening the floor to audience questions. Key themes included:

- The role of precincts and committees to be more formally recognised in the Strategy, particularly in their ability to provide place-based feedback on Council plans, projects, policies etc.
- Some concern over newer Council staff being unfamiliar with local issues and all locations in the municipality.
- A desire to know who does what at Council and how to contact them directly.
- Suggestions for face-to-face engagement included holding regular, widely promoted pop-ups at schools, especially during pickup times.
- 'Closing the loop' was another common theme, with participants expressing a desire for regular updates or outcomes from consultations and to be notified of results. This stresses the importance of timely action on survey results and consultation /exhibition submissions.

Recommendation: The draft Strategy to be updated with a link to the Committees Framework Policy, this policy provides an overview of how Council continues to support and value the contributions of the Precinct Groups and Community Associations and a roadmap for how Council committees operate with community members as committee members.

Disability Inclusion Consultation

Building on the community engagement undertaken to develop the Disability Inclusion Action Plan (2023-27), the Community Engagement Officer held extensive conversations with the Community Hubs team, Illawarra Advocacy, and the Dementia Inclusive Kiama Project. The objective was to cross-check and refine the actions included in the Strategy to support and encourage the participation of people with lived experience and/or experience in disability in decision-making processes.

These conversations highlighted the following points:
- It is crucial to disseminate information through established and trusted networks. Emphasising the importance of building on existing networks and collaborating with community champions can enhance outreach and engagement. Some suggestions include Illawarra Interagency, Dementia Inclusive Kiama Project, Carer Gateway, Meals on Wheels, and the Parkinson Network.
- Carers and support workers play a vital role in the daily lives of individuals with disabilities; therefore, they are key stakeholders in the participation of the disability community. This was further underscored by observations made during the engagement with the Special Support class at the local high school.
- It is essential to engage with the community in locations and settings where they feel most comfortable and supported. Some suggestions include Community Transport, Mayflower Uniting Church Age Care Facility, Blue Haven independent living and residential aged care, Alchemy Chorus at the Uniting Church in Kiama, and Dementia Café.

These insights have been instrumental in refining the Strategy actions related to disability inclusion and informing the Community Engagement Schedule to ensure it is inclusive and effective in meeting community members with experience of a disability and their carers where they are.

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Submissions

A total of 13 submissions were received during the public exhibition period, which were in read and considered in full by the project team. Respondents were asked to:

- Reflect on the feedback received by Council during Phase 1 – co-design - of the Consultation (via the Phase 1 Community Engagement Report) and offer additional insights.
- Review the draft Strategy and identify any potential gaps or omissions.
- Contribute insights to scheduling face-to-face community engagement activities, such as community pop-ups.

Summary of submission comments	Themes	Response and recommended adjustments
Four (4) submissions indicated that the draft Community Engagement Strategy lacks the opportunity for community members and groups to be recognised and heard and to be able to influence Council decisions. To resolve this, the following additions are called for: - Clear definition of the "stakeholders" and who defines who a "stakeholder" is and who is not. - Community Stakeholders list (incl. community groups) that you intend to engage with, which is a requirement by the Office of Local Government (OLG). - A new formal connection between the Precincts with Councillors and staff to be identified in the Community Engagement Strategy. - Pre-defined pathways on how to access and organise access to Councillors and KMC to openly discuss community matters (rather than the community members "being informed" of what Council has decided.	Community Stakeholders definition and identification Precincts and associations Clear pathway to engage Councillors and staff	The different cross-sections of community have been identified through the table on p10 in the Strategy. The role of community is also included in the Roles & Responsibility table on p12-13. The Strategy highlights that community engagement is undertaken when there is an opportunity for impacted communities to influence specific actions, outcomes or decisions or when there is a legislative requirement to do so. The IAP2 matrix allows Council project teams to determine if engagement is required and the degree to which community will be engaged. Council will continue to support and value the contributions of the Precinct Groups and Community Associations, as outlined in Council's Committees Framework Policy, (Endorsed September 2023) **Recommendation:** The draft Strategy to be updated with an adjustment of the "Engaging with Community" to "Engaging community and other stakeholders" with a clear definition of how stakeholders are defined. The table to be updated with the inclusion of the following: - Community organisations and groups - Schools and education providers - Mayor and Councillors - Council staff In addition, the Committees Framework Policy had been added under "Council Strategies and Action Plans" on p11

Five (5) submissions included suggestions for future face-to face opportunities in the engagement schedule. Overall, welcoming additional genuine face-to-face opportunities for Council staff and locals to have conversations and be kept in the loop. The following comments are community pop-up specific: • To have relevant staff, ideally senior, to be present at the pop-up to be able to address any concerns and give confidence that the source is reliable. • Councillors to be present • To involve genuine two-way information between the Community and Council with the opportunity to make a submission, not just an information session with pamphlets. • Location suggestions: farmers markets, Kiama Leagues Club, Bowling Club, Council Halls, at Council and Libraries • Time and place variety to make it accessible to as many community members as possible e.g.: 6pm for those who work full time. • Timing to be aligned to council meetings or important consultation cut offs. In addition, presentations at Precinct Groups and Associations were highlighted as another face-to-face opportunity to engage with community.	Relevant staff Meaningful engagement Meeting community where they are Alignment with Council Meeting schedule Precincts and Associations	All comments have been considered in developing the community pop-up schedule. In addition, this schedule will be reviewed and adjusted throughout the year to ensure it remains effective and continues to meet the community where they are. **Recommendation:** The draft Strategy is to be updated with a community engagement schedule in Appendix 2. The pop-ups are typically scheduled for the week following the Ordinary Council meeting, which occurs on the third Tuesday of the month. This timing allows community members to have their say on any new plans, policies, and strategies placed on public exhibition or opened for consultation. Councillors to be invited to attend pop-ups as appropriate
Three (3) submissions called for more transparent and genuine engagement and communication, with the urge to rebuild trust with the community.	Meaningful and transparent engagement,	Meaningful and transparent engagement is reflected in the objective and principles of the draft Strategy. Additionally, Council's commitment to close the loop on engagement activities more effectively will support rebuilding community trust. **Recommendation:** No amendment to the draft Strategy.

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Item 13.2

Attachment 3

Submission	Topic	Response
One submission raised concerns that surveys could be designed to elicit specific results and that replies might be 'hand-picked' to support certain views. Consequently, it calls for Council to consider polls as a consultation method, as their results are clear and straightforward.	Community engagement tools that provide feedback by design	The draft Strategy includes an action that commits to exploring digital engagement platforms to enhance accessibility and broaden community reach, including quick online polls. **Recommendation:** The draft Strategy action is to be updated to "Explore digital engagement platforms to enhance accessibility and broaden community reach, including online polls that provide feedback by design".
One submission indicated not enough involvement of the community, direct voting on big Council decisions should be introduced. Not for every little decision, but for very big decisions, probably once or twice a year, like very large developments, sales of Council land (that belongs to the community!) Council should give the community the opportunity to directly vote pro or con. That way Council would truly see what the community wants	Empower (IAP2)	For Council to host a direct vote involving all community members has significant budget and resourcing implications. Councillors are the elected body responsible for voting on major council decisions. The draft CES highlights that community engagement is undertaken when there is an opportunity for impacted communities to influence specific actions, outcomes or decisions or when there is a legislative requirement. The IAP2 matrix allows Council project teams to determine if engagement is required and the degree to which stakeholders will be engaged. Community members are always welcome and encouraged to attend Council meetings and Public Access forums and/or watch via Livestream. **Recommendation:** No amendment to the draft Strategy.
One submission highlighted the need for an engagement Strategy to recognise the different needs of different locations.	Communities of place	The draft Strategy recognises communities of place in the table on P10-11. Also, the Community engagement schedule includes pop-ups across the municipality. **Recommendation:** No amendment to the draft Strategy.
One submission called to consider the inclusion of engagement on state and regional proposals to change legislation or regulations that have a significant impact on Kiama LGA within the Strategy. While there is usually a requirement for Council to formally respond to a proposal, and often Council submission is brought to the full Council for endorsement, there is often no broader publicity of the changes in the wider community.	Regional and state proposals and regulations	The draft Strategy recognises NSW and Federal government departments/agencies as key stakeholders in the table on P10. In addition, Council often acts as a conduit for information between the NS/Federal governments and the community, including opportunities for community to provide input. **Recommendation:** No amendment to the draft Strategy.

Attachment 3

Item 13.2

Submission	Theme	Council response
One submission highlighted a critical gap in Kiama Council's approach to community engagement and resource allocation. The Council has failed to effectively utilise the local knowledge and expertise available, particularly evident in the missed opportunities for dairy farmers under the Dairy Industry Recovery and Preparation Plan. This oversight has prevented the local dairy industry from benefiting from national funding initiatives to enhance resilience and preparedness. Calling for: • Strengthening local networks by establishing a formal mechanism for regular communication and collaboration between the Council, local experts, and community leaders. • Developing and maintaining a dynamic database of local professionals and experts, especially those with significant ties to major projects and funding programs. These measures aim to ensure that the community fully benefits from relevant opportunities and resources. • Utilise Council engagement surveys to pinpoint the top two areas that community is most passionate about. Harness this insight to identify and mobilise local expertise, enhancing Council's personnel and funding capacity to successfully deliver on the outcomes of the engagement strategy.	Building on Local network Integrate local expertise	The draft Strategy references Council's commitment to build on existing community networks and Identify community champions to drive engagement with communities of place, identity, interest and need on p11. The development and maintenance of a public community expertise database are resource intensive and not currently within the Council's remint; however, as part of the Community Engagement toolkit, an extensive stakeholder overview will be developed to guide targeted engagements. Council will identify community priorities as part of the review of the Community Strategic Plan, which will take place within three months of the Local Government elections, **Recommendation:** No amendment to the draft Strategy
One submission highlighted that the draft Strategy does not detail the specific metrics or indicators that will be used to assess the effectiveness of the Community Engagement Strategy both during and after the exhibition period and requested clarity on how frequently these evaluations will be conducted to ensure the Strategy adapts and remains effective in meeting	Evaluation metrics	The Council will measure the Strategy's effectiveness against indicators linked to the actions on p8 in the draft strategy. This feeds into the operational plan action (5.2.3.1.1) proposed for 2024-25: Update and implement Council's Community Engagement Strategy following Integrated Planning and Reporting requirements and incorporating Community Participation Plan, in accordance with Local

Topic	Submission	Response
	community needs before its final endorsement by the Council.	Government Act and NSW Department of Planning (DPE) requirements. In addition, each individual community engagement project will be evaluated against the guiding principles of the Strategy as part of the reporting phase (p19) of the engagement framework. **Recommendation:** The draft Strategy is to be updated with Appendix 1: Evaluation Metrics.
Local newspaper	One submission highlighted that Council does not advertise in *The Bugle*, which is one local newspaper. Please reference to advertising in the 'local newspaper' as 'optional' or the limitations noted.	Council currently focuses its advertising spend on the Illawarra Mercury, which is a local newspaper. Council's Communications Officers continue to provide media releases and Council statements as well as supply answers to questions from Bugle journalists, as per Council's Media Policy. This means the editorial in the paper continues to provide broad coverage of Council events, projects, strategies and engagements. **Recommendation:** No amendment to the draft Strategy.
Community Participation Plan	One submission called to include a sentence or two somewhere in this section to note the role of the CPP alongside the CES and to Community Participation Plan (2019) to the list on p11.	The draft Strategy will be updated accordingly. **Recommendation:** The draft Strategy is to be updated with an additional paragraph on the Community Participation Plan (CPP) on p4 and the CPP has been included in the" Strategies and Action Plan" list on p11.
Social justice principles	One submission highlighted Council's Community Strategic Plan references Social Justice Principles that underpin our work. Community engagement is a huge part of this. Suggest providing a brief description of the principles of equity, participation, access and rights.	The draft Strategy will be updated accordingly. **Recommendation:** The draft Strategy to be updated with the inclusion of social justice principles.

Attachment 3

Item 13.2

| | Strategies and Action plans | One submission highlighted (under strategies and action plans) community action plans should not be sitting separately to the list above and the wording to describe them is inaccurate. They currently read as secondary plans. Suggest having two subheadings, one for strategies and one for action plans. | The draft Strategy will be updated accordingly. **Recommendation:** the draft Strategy is to be updated with the inclusion of social justice principles. |
| | | One submission highlighted there to be relatively short time span to respond to the "Your community, your say" survey. Being launched between the resumption of schools & universities and close to Easter. Council should conduct community engagement at times of the year that are not close to holiday periods. | The survey was provided as part of the co-design process and, therefore, was not a legislative requirement with a specified timeline. Considering the survey was live for from 13 Mach to 2 April and received 250+ responses, representing roughly 1% of Kiama LGA's population, it was a good result. Council during this co-design period also reached around 1,000 community members to make them aware of the Strategy being drafted and gather their thoughts and feedback. **Recommendation:** No amendment to the draft Strategy. |

Other significant additions or amendments

Section	Addition / Amendment	Reason
Strategic approach (p8-9)	Refined "Actions" section	Based on the learnings from engagement during Public Exhibition phase
Engaging with Community (p10-11)	Added "Decision-making" section	To highlight the other factors that play a role in Council decision-making
	Moved the Diversity, equity and inclusion actions into the "Actions" section p9	For consistency
4. Report (p19)	Rename "Report" to "Close the Loop"	To emphasise the importance of this phase
Appendix 1: Community Engagement Schedule (p20)	Added "Community Engagement Schedule"	Developed during the Public Exhibition phase

Thank you!

Thank you to those who joined us at the community pop-ups throughout the Municipality, participated in our workshops or provided us with a submission. Your input and feedback are invaluable in this process and ensure that the Strategy meets the needs and aspirations of our community and stakeholder.

20 | Community Engagement Report: Phase 2

Appendix 1: Summary of engagement activities

Date	Event	Reach	Engaged
Phase 1: consultation - Co-design			
29- Feb	Your community your say Project page	879	
29-Feb	Press release: "Growth and Community Engagement" on Council website, distributed to media lists.	959	
29-Feb	Social media schedule launched of 8 posts		
13 March	Launch of "your community, your say" survey – online and paper versions		242
13-Mar	Infrastructure & Liveability Committee – workshop		7
14-Mar	Flyers printed and handed out, and available at Council's Administration Centre and Libraries.	1000	
14-17 March	Council staff at Household Bulky Waste event engaging with community and handing out flyers	520	50
22-Mar	Community pop-ups at Kiama Downs - FoodWorks	100	20
22-Mar	Community pop-ups at Kiama Downs - IGA	30	10
22-Mar	Meeting with Precincts and Associations (KAPA)	40	9
23-Mar	Community pop-ups at Minnamurra	20	5
23-Mar	Community pop-ups at Jamberoo	50	20
23-Mar	Community pop-ups at Gerringong	200	25
23-Mar	Community pop-ups at Gerroa	2	
26-Mar	Sustainable Communities Committee – workshop		7
27-Mar	Community pop-ups at Farmers Market	50	25
2-Apr	Meeting with Kiama High School SRC students		16
12-Apr	Industry forum round table discussion		60
Phase 2: Consultation - Public Exhibition			
17-Apr	Press release "Draft Community Engagement Strategy placed on public exhibition" on Council website, distributed to media lists	256	
17-Apr	Publication Community engagement report: Phase 1	15	
18-Apr	Social media schedule launched of 6 posts		
30-Apr	Community pop-ups at Kiama Library	50	15
1-May	Observation of Primary School Engagement		90
2-May	Community pop-ups at Gerringong Library	20	8
2-May	Community pop-ups at Kiama Leisure Centre	55	10
7-May	JVRRA - presentation and discussion		20
8-May	Community pop-ups at Kiama Farmers Market	40	10
9-May	Community pop-ups at Kiama Leisure Centre	40	10
15-May	Observation of Highschool School Engagement		200
31-May	Disability Inclusion conversations		3
	Total	**3311**	**620**