

## 17 REPORTS FOR INFORMATION

### 17.1 Community Engagement Strategy - review

Responsible Director: Office of the Chief Executive Officer

---

#### Report

Under section 402A of the Local Government Act, a council must establish and implement a strategy for engagement with the local community (called its Community Engagement Strategy) when developing its plans, policies and programs, and for the purpose of determining its activities (other than routine administrative matters).

According to the Office of Local Government's Integrated Planning & Reporting (IP&R) guidelines, the Community Engagement Strategy must be reviewed within 3 months of the local government elections, as part of the broader review of the Community Strategic Plan.

Kiama Council substantially revised and redesigned its Community Engagement Strategy from early 2024, undertaking a program of comprehensive co-design and engagement with stakeholders including our local community, Councillors and Council staff. The finalised Strategy was endorsed by Council in June 2024.

The implementation of the strategy has been highly successful so far, with improved community engagements including our program of Community pop-ups, increased promotion of policies and strategies on exhibition, more customised surveys and other digital engagement strategies, and the internal program of upskilling staff well underway.

Further, Kiama Council has just launched a new Community Engagement platform using Social Pinpoint to revamp its 'Your Say' section of the website to increase user friendliness and provide interactive feedback. This platform also allows staff to create more consistent engagement reports and better 'close the loop' – which is a key action of the current Community Engagement Strategy.

During the development of the Community Engagement Strategy, it was identified that the next update of the Strategy would include the Community Participation Plan (CPP), however, since the CPP is now due to be reviewed and updated in the first half of 2025, Council will wait to review the Engagement Strategy until this time.

Councillors will have an opportunity to provide feedback and further shape the Community Engagement Strategy when it is put on exhibition alongside the CPP in 2025.

#### Communication/Community Engagement

See previous Council report and Community Engagement Report via <https://yoursay.kiama.nsw.gov.au/community-engagement-strategy>

#### Risk implication

This report mitigates the risk of breaching IP&R guidelines while assisting Council to continue to move through its Community Engagement work and other strategic priorities in a timely way, while continuing to implement the current Community Engagement Strategy.