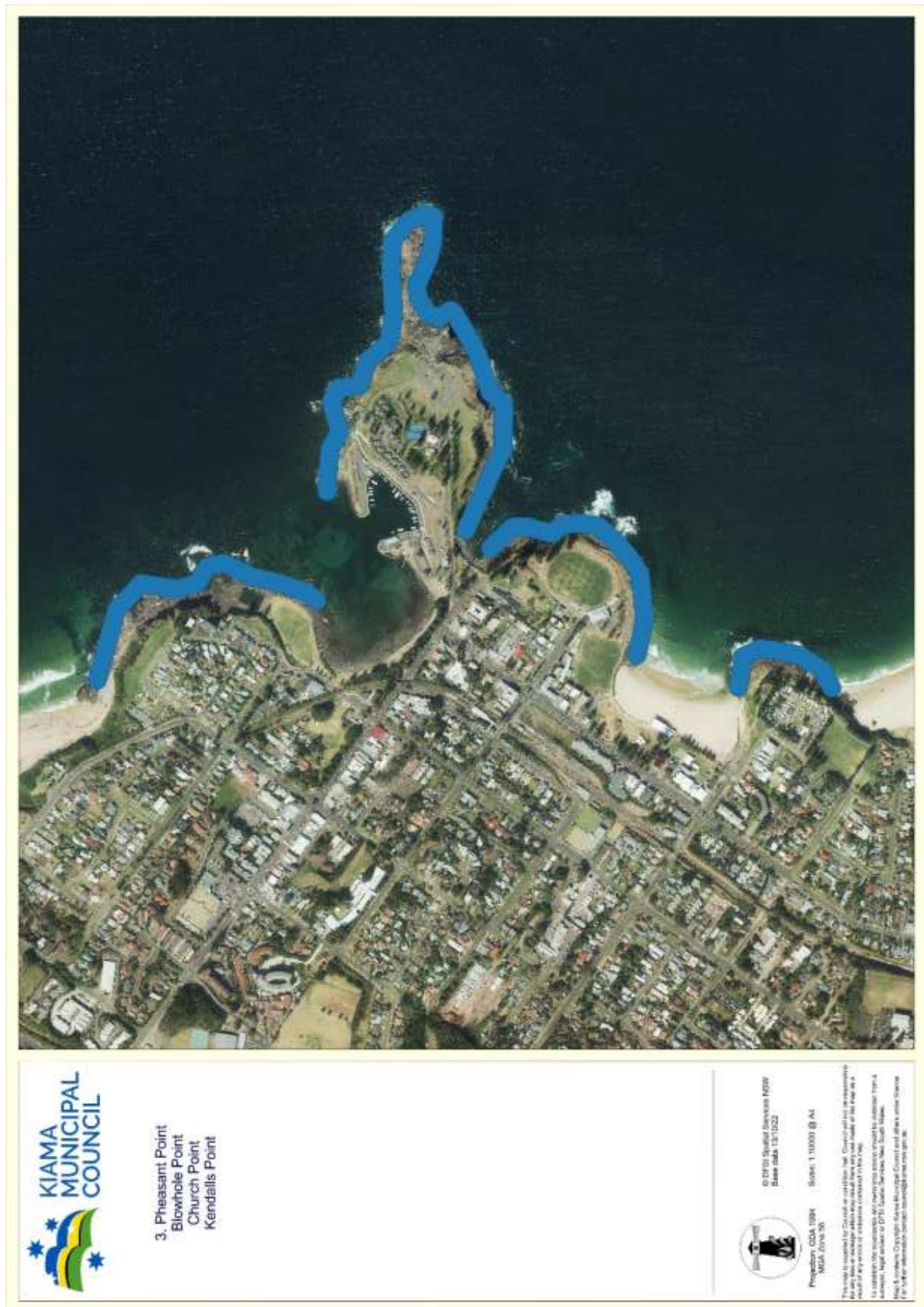








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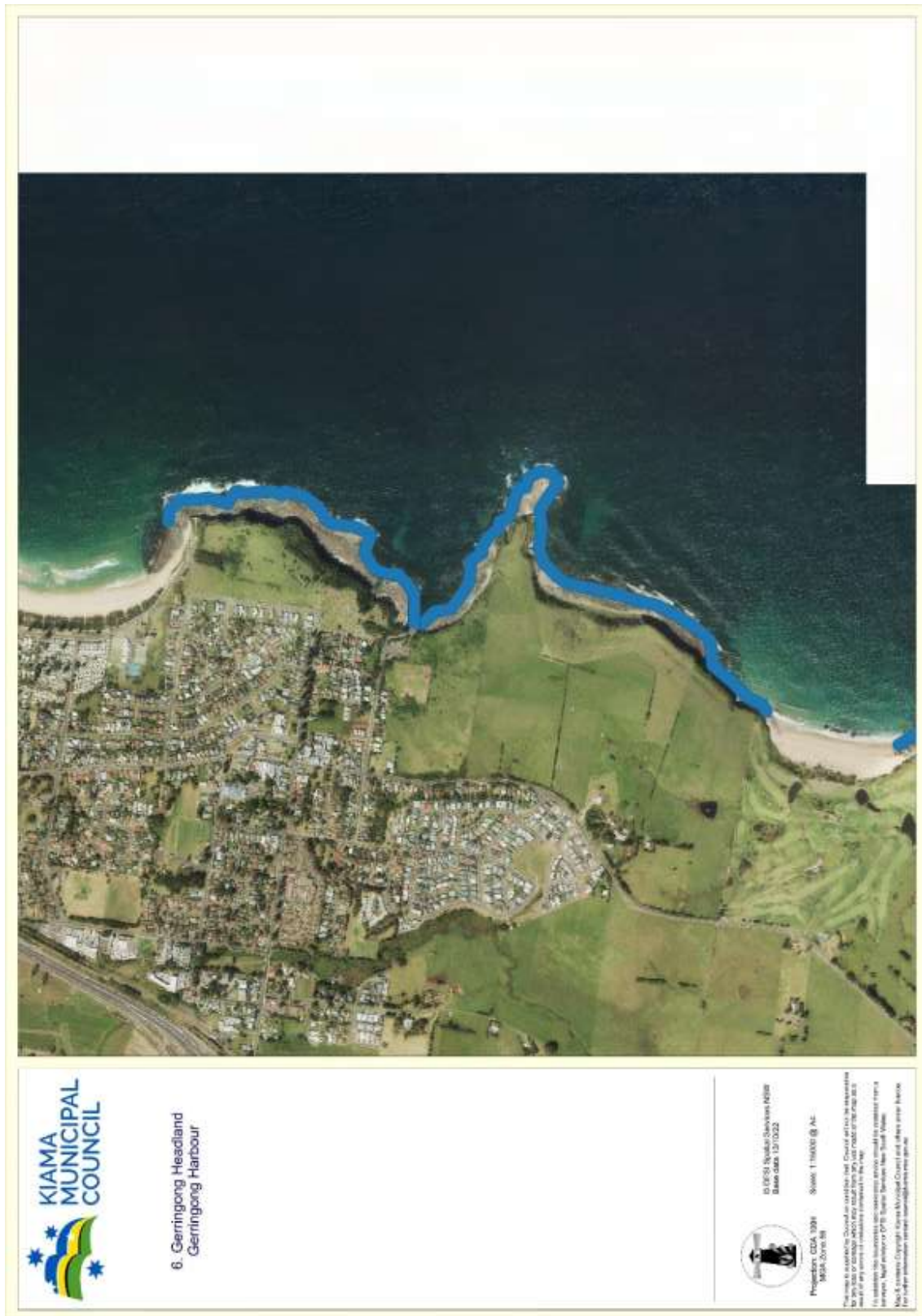
Enclosure 3



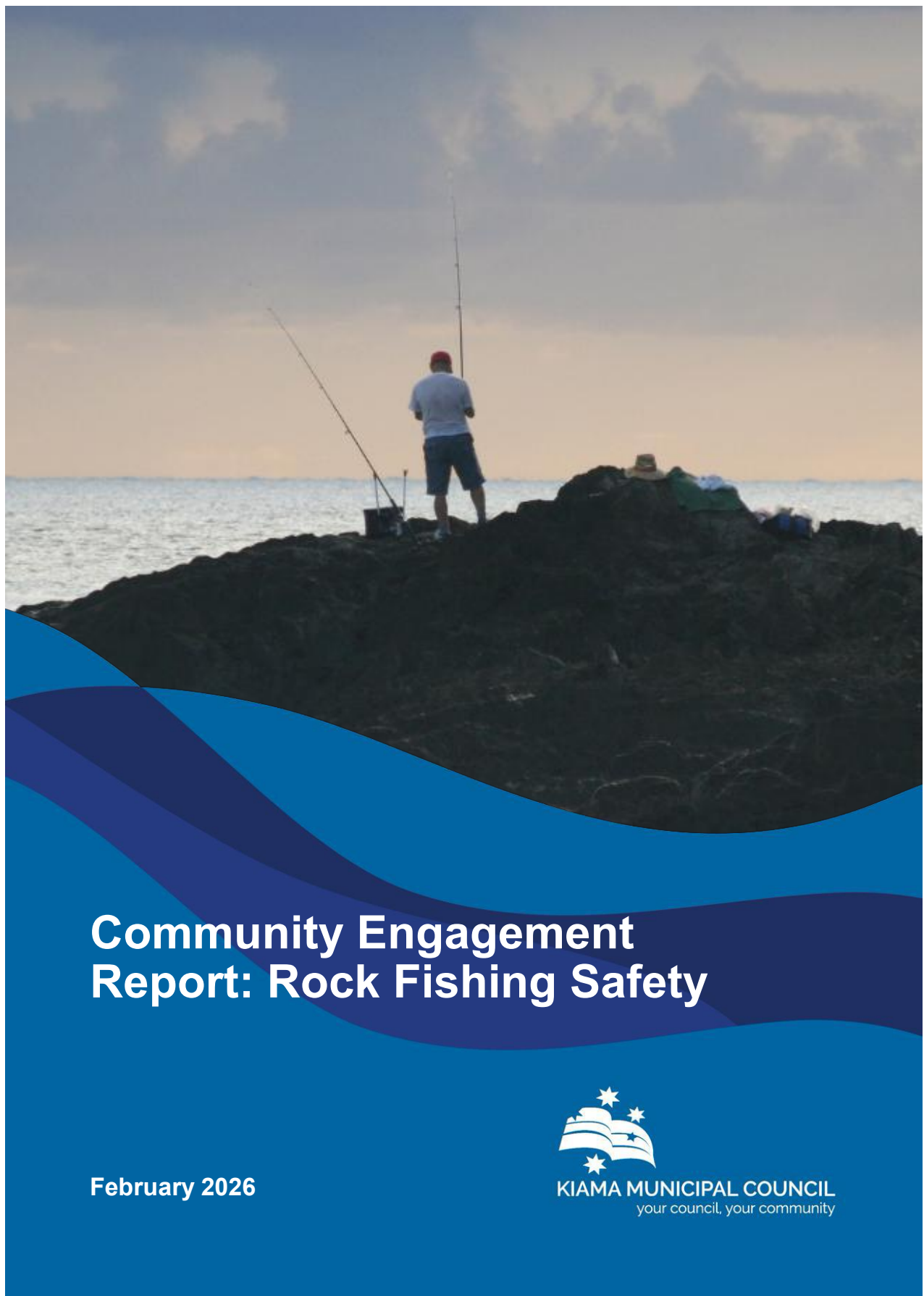


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Community Engagement Report: Rock Fishing Safety

February 2026



KIAMA MUNICIPAL COUNCIL
your council. your community

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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3 — COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT REPORT: ROCK FISHING SAFETY

Overview

Council is considering opting in to the NSW *Rock Fishing Safety Act 2016*. Opting in would declare all rock platforms in the Kiama LGA as high-risk fishing locations, requiring anyone rock fishing on these platforms to wear an approved lifejacket.

Between November 2025 and February 2026, we asked the community whether lifejackets should be mandatory for everyone when rock fishing. This report shares what we heard and explains how feedback will help inform Council's decision on whether to opt in to the Act.

Engagement period

14 November 2025 – 1 February 2026

How you got involved



483

Website visitors



56+

Pop-up participation



54

Survey responses



139

Quick poll contributions



184

QR code scans

What we heard

The engagement program, delivered through surveys, a quick poll and face to face activities, captured views from residents, visitors, active rock fishers and those connected to rock fishing through family or friends.

While there was strong support for making life jackets compulsory, behaviour did not consistently align with half of surveyed rock fishers reporting they never wear one.

Face to face engagement, including pop up activities and a Surf Life Saving NSW event, reinforced the need for practical safety measures, improved access to equipment and a balanced approach to enforcement.

What's next

If Council endorses the proposal at the 17 March 2026 Council Meeting, it will then write to the Minister for Local Government requesting a declaration under the Rock Fishing Safety Act 2016 that the Kiama Local Government Area is a high-risk rock fishing location. Once the declaration is made, legislation will designate all rock platforms within the Kiama Municipality as high-risk areas where wearing an approved life jacket is mandatory. This will make life jackets compulsory for all rock fishers and enable enforcement by NSW Police and Fisheries Officer.

4 — COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT REPORT: ROCK FISHING SAFETY

Promotional activities

A wide range of communications and media channels were used to reach a broad audience.

The key objective was to gather feedback from a diverse mix of people, including both residents and visitors. The following communications were utilised throughout the campaign period shown in Table 1.

Table 1

Channel	Audience	Details
Project page on Your Say Kiama	General public, Stakeholders	Central hub for project info, updates, and feedback opportunities. During the consultation period the page recorded 483 visits.
Council social media x 18	Media, residents	Eighteen social media posts were broadcast across Facebook, Instagram and LinkedIn, achieving a reach of over 6,224.
Kimunico e-news mention	E-newsletter subscribers	An email newsletter was distributed to subscribed community members on 3 December 2025. It was delivered to 1,424 people and achieved an open rate of 39%. Signage was placed on at key locations and on community noticeboards throughout the LGA with a QR code to scan which took participants directly to the project page.

Hard copy posters and corflute signage
Residents, visitors



5 — COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT REPORT: ROCK FISHING SAFETY

Engagement activities

We used a range of engagement methods to gather community input and hear from diverse voices. These activities provided valuable insights to guide Council's decision on whether to opt in to the Act. A summary of these engagement methods and activities is outlined below.

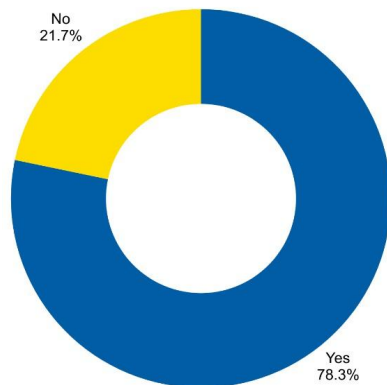
Quick poll

Community members were invited to share their views on whether wearing a lifejacket should be compulsory when rock fishing. The online poll was open to everyone ensuring a diverse range of voices.

A total of 139 participants completed the online quick poll.

Voting results

- Yes - 108
- No – 30



Ask a question

Community members were invited to ask questions about rock fishing safety or the proposed changes and read answers to common questions. Three questions were submitted and responded to during the consultation period.

View Appendix 1 to see what was asked, and how we responded.

Community pop-ups

Council staff from the Environment and Compliance team attended a rock fishing safety workshop run by Surf Life Saving NSW on Sunday 16 November 2025. The event attracted over 100 local rock fishers, who received a free lifejacket for attending. This was a valuable opportunity to speak directly with people engaged in rock fishing.

Two community pop-ups were held at high-traffic locations, facilitated by the same team along with the Community Engagement Officer:

- Wednesday 3 December 2025 at Kiama Farmers Market
- Thursday 4 December 2025 at IGA Gerringong.

These events reached over 100 people, with 56 community members actively participating in the dotmocracy activity. A photograph of the dotmocracy activity is included in Appendix 2.



Dotmocracy at Kiama Farmers Market

6 — COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT REPORT: ROCK FISHING SAFETY

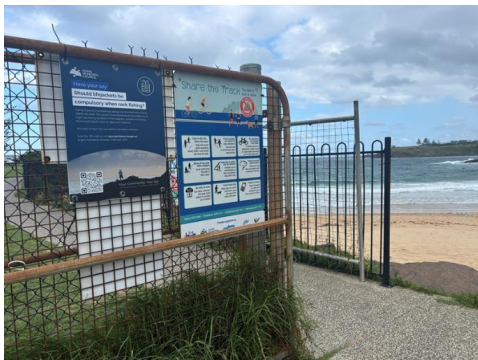
Corflute signage at popular rock fishing spots

Thirty six (36) corflute signs were installed at rock fishing locations across the municipality. Each sign included a QR code linking directly to the consultation page, making it easy for fishers and visitors to access information and have their say while on site.

A total of 184 people scanned the QR code during the consultation period. This method helped reach people who were actively engaged in rock fishing and may not otherwise participate in online or in person engagement activities.



Bombo Quarry



Surf Beach, Kiama

Direct stakeholder engagement

To support a well-informed decision, Council has been engaging with a range of stakeholders, including:

- Surf Lifesaving NSW, South Coast Branch
- NSW Police including Marine Area Command
- Marine Rescue
- Crown Lands
- Local Fishing Clubs
- Council Lifeguards
- Local MP
- Illawarra Shoalhaven Joint Organisation
- NSW DPI Fisheries

Survey

Council invited fishers and observers to share feedback to help us understand local fishing habits and what matters most to the community. The survey took around five minutes to complete and received 54 responses.

The survey provided deeper insights into fishing practices and safety attitudes, complementing the quick poll, which offered a snapshot of broader community views.

The following sections summarise the key themes and findings, with a focus on insights from the more detailed survey responses.

7 — COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT REPORT: ROCK FISHING SAFETY

Key themes and findings

Strong support for compulsory life jackets

The engagement program showed strong community support for making life jackets compulsory for rock fishers. In the quick poll, 78.3% of respondents supported compulsory life jackets while 70% of survey respondents agreed.

A smaller proportion of participants did not support this approach. This included 21.7% of quick poll respondents and 30% of survey participants.

Face to face engagement largely echoed the strong support identified through the survey and quick poll. At the Surf Life Saving NSW rock fishing safety event, all participating rock fishers agreed that wearing a life jacket should be compulsory.

At pop-up engagement activities, where participants included both fishers and members of the general community with varying levels of interest and experience, responses were mixed. Of those who provided a view, 54 people supported compulsory life jackets while 3 people did not.

Participants shared a range of perspectives, including the importance of improving access to safety equipment, concerns about applying the same rules to all fishers and preferences for alternative safety measures over increased enforcement.

Comments included:

- Life jackets should be more readily available to the community.
- Life jackets should be compulsory for young people rather than for all fishers.
- Installing safety barriers would be a positive safety measure.

Direct stakeholder engagement

Several agencies and government organisations were approached for feedback and these included:

- NSW Police – Port Kembla and Lake Illawarra Police.
- Marine Area Command (Water Police).
- Surf Life Saving NSW.
- Surf Life Saving NSW South Coast Branch.
- Illawarra Shoalhaven Joint Organisation.
- Crown Lands (Department of Planning, Housing and Infrastructure).
- Kiama Council Supervising Breach Lifeguard.
- Kiama Amateur Fishing Club.
- Member for Kiama, Katelin McInerney MP.
- NSW Fisheries.
- NSW Marine Rescue.
- Kiama Game Fishing Club.
- Gerroa Boat Fishing Club.
- Gerringong Hotel Fishing Club.
- Kiama Downs Surf Life Saving Club.
- Kiama Surf Life Saving Club.
- Gerringong Surf Life Saving Club.

The following agencies and organisations responded with a letter of support:

- NSW Police – Lake Illawarra Police.
- Port Kembla Water Police (NSW Police Marine Area Command).
- Surf Life Saving NSW (including 3 local surf clubs).
- Surf Life Saving NSW South Coast Branch (including 3 local surf clubs).

8 — COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT REPORT: ROCK FISHING SAFETY

- Illawarra Shoalhaven Joint Organisation.
- Crown Lands (Department of Planning, Housing and Infrastructure).
- Kiama Council Supervising Breach Lifeguard.

The Kiama Amateur Fishing Club provided e-mail feedback stating that the members had mixed opinions on the matter and were unable to come to a unanimous decision. However, they did agree that, if it is too dangerous to fish, or you are inexperienced, the local rock ledges around Kiama are not suitable for novice rock fisher regardless if they have a lifejacket or not.

The other agencies or organisations are yet to return feedback. A summary of the stakeholder feedback can be found in Appendix 3.

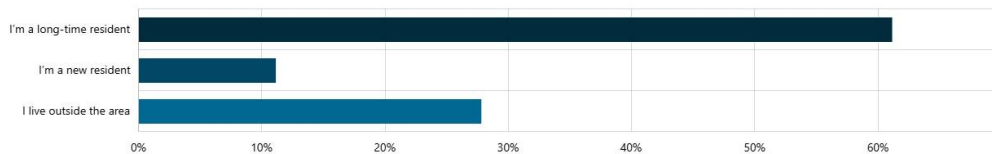
Survey responses

Connection to the Kiama area

Most survey respondents identified as long-time residents of the Kiama area. Just over three-fifths of respondents, 61.1%, reported living in the area long term, indicating strong local representation in the engagement.

A further 27.8% of respondents lived outside the area, suggesting interest in rock fishing safety extends beyond residents. New residents made up a smaller proportion of respondents at 11.1%.

Overall, the responses reflect a mix of established local perspectives alongside views from visitors and newer community members.

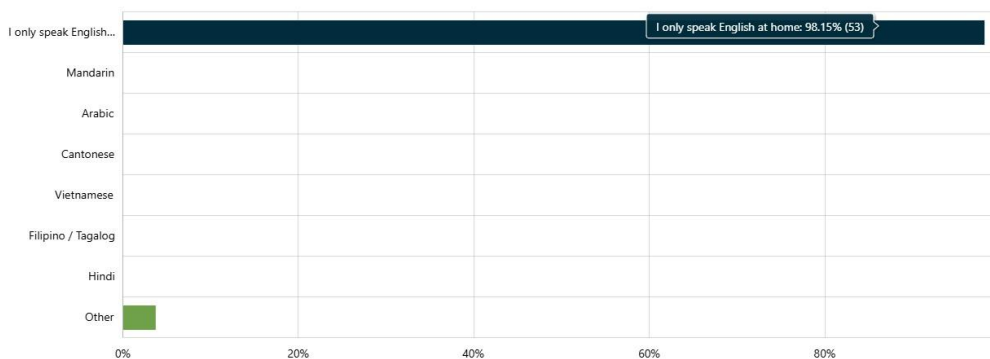


Language spoken at home

Almost all survey respondents reported speaking only English at home. This included 98.1% of respondents, indicating that the engagement primarily reached English-speaking community members.

A very small number of respondents selected another language, while no respondents identified speaking Mandarin, Arabic, Cantonese, Vietnamese, Filipino or Hindi at home.

Overall, the results suggest limited linguistic diversity among survey participants, which may be relevant when considering the accessibility and reach of future engagement and safety messaging.

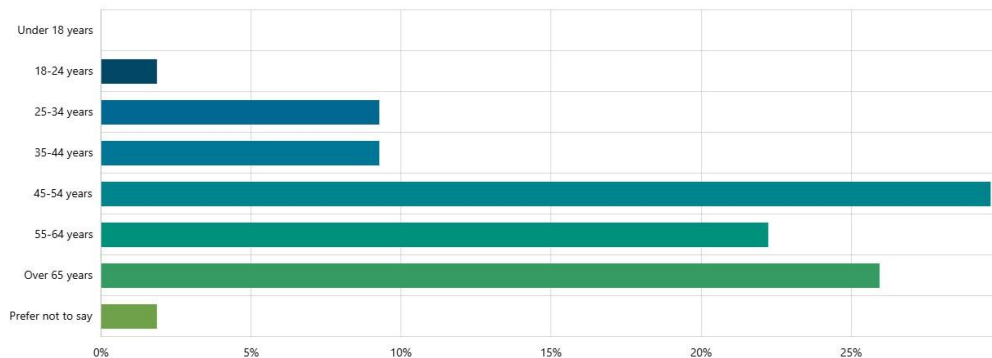


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Age range

Survey respondents were predominantly older adults, with strong representation from people aged 45 years and over. Nearly four in five respondents, 77.8 per cent, were aged 45 or older with the largest age group being those aged 45–54 years, followed by respondents aged over 65 years and those aged 55–64 years.

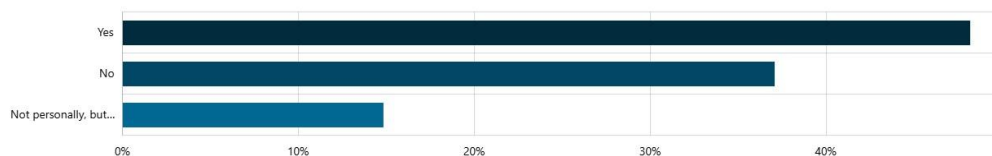
Participation from younger age groups was limited. Less than 21 per cent of respondents were aged between 25 and 44 years, and only one respondent was aged 18–24 years. No responses were received from people under 18 years of age.



Rock fishing involvement

Just under half of survey respondents, 48.2%, reported that they personally participate in rock fishing activities. A further 14.8% indicated they do not fish themselves but have someone close to them who does, highlighting broader indirect exposure to rock fishing risks.

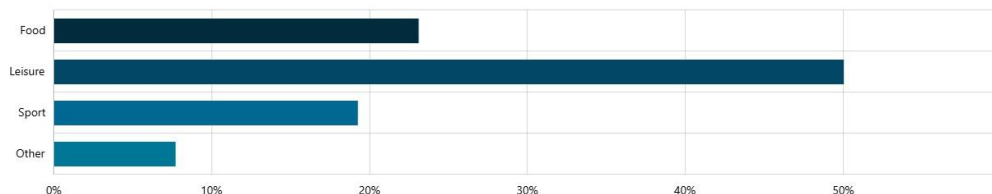
More than one-third of respondents, 37%, reported no personal involvement in rock fishing. This suggests the engagement captured views from both active rock fishers and members of the wider community, providing a mix of firsthand experience and observer perspectives.



Reasons for rock fishing

Leisure was the most common reason for rock fishing, cited by half of respondents who participate in the activity. This highlights rock fishing as a recreational pursuit for many participants, rather than a primarily subsistence or competitive activity.

Fishing for food was the next most common reason, reported by 23.1% of respondents, followed by sport fishing at 19.2%. A small number of respondents selected other reasons, indicating some diversity in motivations.



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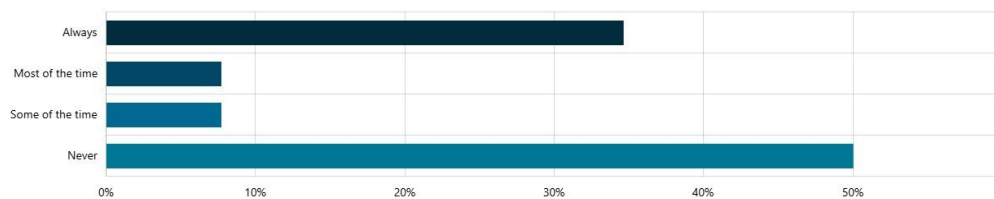
Life jacket use while rock fishing

Life jacket use among rock fishers was mixed, with a significant proportion reporting that they do not wear a life jacket. Half of respondents, 50%, indicated that they never wear a life jacket when rock fishing.

Just over one-third of respondents, 34.6%, reported that they always wear a life jacket.

A smaller proportion reported inconsistent use, with 7.7% wearing a life jacket most of the time and a further 7.7% wearing one some of the time.

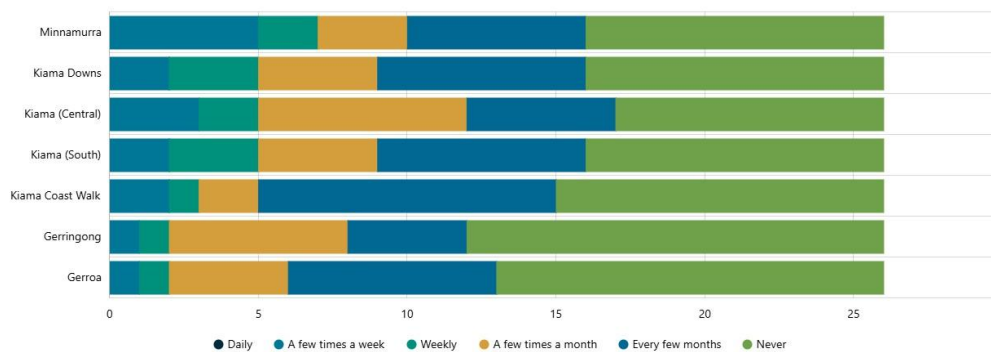
Overall, these results suggest that while some rock fishers consistently adopt safety measures, a substantial proportion do not routinely wear life jackets. This indicates an opportunity for improved safety awareness and behaviour change.



Rock platform locations and frequency of fishing

Finding indicated that rock fishing activity is concentrated around the northern Kiama area, with lower levels of regular use further south.

These results suggest targeted engagement and safety measures will have the greatest reach at Minnamurra and the Kiama town sites. Additional awareness and access initiatives may be warranted along the Coast Walk and in the southern locations, where regular use is lower but occasional activity is common.



Suggestions to consider

During the consultation period the following themes and suggestions to consider were made:

- Life jackets should be more readily available to the community
- Education for non-English speakers and people that are not local to the area
- Education for local schools
- Tethering points should be provided
- Rock fishers should wear high visibility vests

11 — COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT REPORT: ROCK FISHING SAFETY

Recommendation

It is recommended that Council opt-in to the Rock Fishing Act 2016 and make the wearing of approved life jackets mandatory in the declared high risk rock fishing areas in the Kiama Municipality.

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12 — COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT REPORT: ROCK FISHING SAFETY

Appendix 1: Q&A

Question	Answer
Why Kiama Council even conducting a survey on life jackets? They save lives!	Council agrees that lifejackets save lives. The survey isn't questioning their effectiveness – it's part of the required process for deciding whether to opt in to the NSW Rock Fishing Safety Act 2016. To opt in, Council <i>must</i> undertake community consultation and then report the findings back to Councillors for a formal resolution. Only after this step can Council write to the Minister to request inclusion in the legislation. While Councillors have already expressed strong support for opting in, we still need to complete targeted community engagement. This allows us to understand local rock fishing habits, hear from the people who will be most affected and make sure the final report to Council reflects community needs and experiences.
Are there any proposed requirements for other (non-fishing) activities on rock platforms, e.g. walking?	This consultation is about rock fishing safety. Council is looking at options under the Rock Fishing Safety Act 2016, as rock fishing is recognised as a higher-risk activity. There are no proposed requirements for other activities on rock platforms at this time. What we hear through this consultation will help shape future safety education, signage and awareness efforts.
Has council conducted a risk assessment for the consideration of mandatory life jackets? If so where can we gain access to said risk assessment and the imperial data for the assessment?	Councils are not required to conduct a separate risk assessment in order to opt in to the NSW Rock Fishing Safety Act 2016. The Act sets out a specific process for councils to follow, involving three key steps: 1. Conducting community consultation to understand local views on the introduction of mandatory life jacket requirements for rock fishers.

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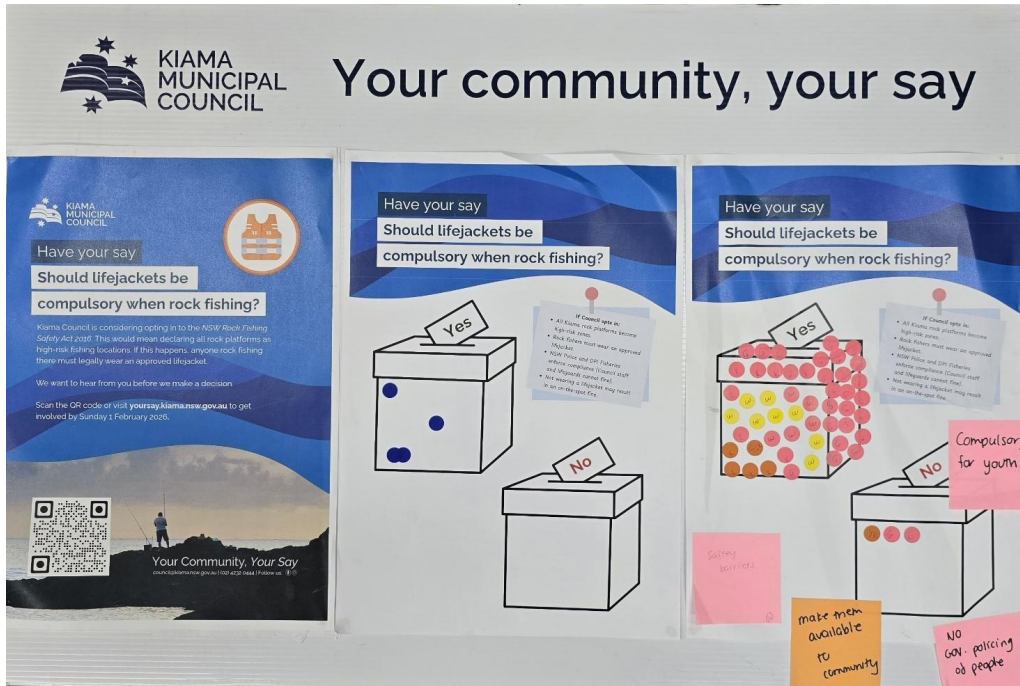
2. Reporting the outcomes of that consultation to Council and seeking a formal Council resolution to opt in.
3. Writing to the Minister to request that designated areas within the municipality be declared zones under the Act.

The legislation itself was introduced in response to a long history of serious incidents associated with rock fishing across NSW, including in our local area. This established evidence base recognises rock fishing as a high risk activity and underpins the Act, rather than requiring each council to undertake a new or separate risk assessment.

For this reason, there is no standalone Council risk assessment or local data set available to share. The decision-making process focuses on community consultation, a Council resolution and the formal steps set out in the legislation

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Appendix 2: Dotmocracy



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15 — COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT REPORT: ROCK FISHING SAFETY

Appendix 3: Stakeholder feedback

Organisation	Summary of feedback	Supportive / Not Supportive
NSW Police – Port Kembla Water Police – Marine Area Command	- Following consultation with members of the Marine Area Command Senior Management Team they fully support Council opting in to the <i>NSW Rock Fishing Safety Act 2016</i>. - Port Kembla Water Police will look to support this initiative with education, enforcement, and general patrols of high-risk locations to help prevent further incidents.	Supportive
NSW Police – Lake Illawarra Police District	Lake Illawarra PD consents to Kiama Municipal Council opting in to the legislation to prevent further rock fishing fatalities and injuries within the LGA.	Supportive
Surf Life Saving NSW (including 3 local surf clubs)	- Surf Life Saving NSW (SLSNSW) both applauds and supports council's proposed opt in to the NSW Rock Fishing Safety Act. - Surf Life Saving NSW reiterates its support to council for proposing to move forward with this commitment to rock fishing safety,	Supportive
Surf Life Saving NSW South Coast Branch (including 3 local surf clubs)	- South Coast Branch Surf Life Saving applauds Kiama Municipal Council for its decision to opt in to the NSW Rock Fishing Safety Act. This is a position they strongly support and sincerely hope Council continues to pursue. - South Coast Branch Surf Life Saving strongly supports any measures that enhance public safety and reduce preventable drownings, and we commend Council for taking proactive action in this space.	Supportive
Illawarra Shoalhaven Joint Organisation	- Support Council in its consideration of this very important measure. - If Council proceeds with opting into the legislation it will become one of a number of coastal councils including Wollongong City Council that have seen the wisdom of adding this considerable resource to their safety frameworks. It will, as a result, benefit from the experiences of those councils in implementing the legislation and it will have easier access to shared initiatives including education initiatives as implementation is undertaken.	Supportive

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16 — COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT REPORT: ROCK FISHING SAFETY

Crown Lands (Department of Planning, Housing and Infrastructure)	- Acknowledge the significant safety challenges associated with rock fishing along the Kiama coastline and recognise the history of serious incidents and fatalities in the area. Increasing lifejacket use is an important and sensible measure that can help reduce the risk of drowning. - The Department has no objection to Council's proposal to opt in to the Act. Their position is subject to the following considerations: - Council is responsible for supporting enforcement of the Act in partnership with NSW Police and NSW DPIRD Fisheries, in line with current legislative arrangements. - Any fixed equipment proposed for installation on Crown land not under Council's management—including but not limited to signage, angel rings, emergency communications equipment or surveillance devices—will require the appropriate authorisation from the Department before installation.	Supportive
Supervising Beach Lifeguard (Kiama Municipal Council)	- Supportive. - Seen an increase in fisherman and been involved in numerous searches for missing fisherman in the last 7 years. Rescued a fisherman washed off the rocks early last year and retrieved a body off the rocks last month.	Supportive
Kiama Amateur Fishing Club	- Committee has mixed opinions on this matter and unable to support for or against opting in. - The one thing they did agree on was that if it is too dangerous to fish, or you are inexperienced, the local rock ledges around Kiama are not suitable for novice rock fishers – lifejacket or not.	Noncommittal

We also sent letters to the below however did not receive a response.

- Katelin McInerney MP, Member for Kiama
- NSW Fisheries
- NSW Marine Rescue
- Kiama Game Fishing Club
- Gerroa Boat Fishing Club
- Gerringong Hotel Fishing Club

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How to contact council

Post

Chief Executive Officer
Kiama Municipal Council
Po Box 75
Kiama NSW 2533

Telephone

+61 (02) 4232 0444

Online

Email: council@kiama.nsw.gov.au

Website: www.kiama.nsw.gov.au



In person

Our Administration Building located at 11 Manning Street Kiama is open 8.45am to 4.15pm Monday to Friday (excluding public holidays)

Respect
Innovation
Integrity
Teamwork
Excellence



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