Kiama After Dark Strategy

June 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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Kiama After Dark, Credits: Peter Izzard

Enclosure 1 **Item 15.2**

1.0 Executive Summary

This Strategy provides a shared vision and framework that allows the Kiama Local Government Area to continue developing as a vibrant and distinctive after dark destination for both locals and visitors. Recognising Kiama CBD as the principal centre for after dark activity, the Strategy also acknowledges the important supporting role of the area's coastal and hinterland villages and populations.

Informed by extensive engagement with the community, local businesses, industry stakeholders and government agencies, alongside economic data compiled by Geografia, as well as targeted research, benchmarking, and day and night place audits, the Strategy adopts an evidence-based and place-led approach to shaping Kiama's after dark economy. Engagement identified strong support for a more vibrant, diverse and connected after dark offer that reflects the character, values and lifestyle of the area.

The Strategy draws on several relevant case studies that demonstrate successful approaches to night-time economy development in comparable regional and coastal contexts, including Lorne (VIC), Milton (NSW) and Folkestone (Kent, UK). These case studies highlight the importance of strong collaboration between government, businesses and community stakeholders, walkability, destination identity, coordinated programming and public realm activation.

The Strategy spans a 10-year horizon supported by five key focus areas, including Collaborative Leadership and Governance; Planning and Placemaking; Vibrancy; Connectivity; and Place Identity – all of which are essential to fostering a successful and sustainable night-time economy. These focus areas are supported by a phased implementation plan identifying quick wins alongside short-, medium- and longer-term actions.

The Strategy recognises that creating a vibrant, safe and sustainable after dark economy is a shared responsibility, with everyone having a role to play. Success will rely on a shared effort between local businesses, the community and government, with businesses playing a central role in delivering after-dark experiences, supported by community participation and enabled through coordinated leadership, balanced regulation and targeted support.

In the current economic climate, this collaborative approach is essential to maximise strengths, manage financial pressures, and deliver a resilient and impactful after dark economy that can adapt to future challenges and opportunities.

The Strategy also identifies Council's evolving overarching strategic role in supporting the after dark economy over time. During the early stages of implementation, Council will play a strong leadership and facilitation role, supporting coordination, governance and partnership building. As the after dark economy matures, this role will evolve toward capacity building and ultimately enabling long-term industry and community-led growth, supported by shared responsibility for place outcomes, activation and ongoing collaboration across the LGA.

Importantly, the Strategy is intended to be iterative and adaptive. A monitoring and evaluation framework will support ongoing review, measurement and refinement, ensuring the Strategy remains responsive to changing community needs, market conditions and emerging opportunities.

2.0 Vision

“Kiama will welcome and inspire the local community and visitors to experience its distinctive natural beauty, community spirit and laidback lifestyle through a vibrant and memorable ‘after dark’ atmosphere – where community, culture, events, and heritage come together. As Kiama evolves, it will grow as a more prosperous regional hub, with a strong and sustainable after-dark economy that supports diverse local businesses, fosters safe year-round activity and creates meaningful experiences, enhancing Kiama as a place alive with opportunity for all, both day and night.”

Kiama township. Credit: Hannah Macleanan, Point Footage

3.0 About our After Dark Strategy

Kiama Council received funding from the NSW State Government to develop a Night-time Economy Strategy. The 10-year Strategy identifies opportunities, key challenges, six key focus areas and associated actions to cultivate a vibrant after-dark economy across the Kiama Local Government Area (LGA), building on existing strengths while supporting strategic growth and diversification. It seeks to foster a vibrant, safe and inclusive environment that benefits people who live, work, visit or provide essential services in the area.

Informed by extensive engagement with a broad range of stakeholders, including residents, business owners and essential service providers, the Strategy adopts a comprehensive and inclusive approach. This engagement underpins a clear and shared vision for Kiama's future after dark, supported by robust data (prepared by Geografia), targeted research, and best-practice examples.

The term "after dark" is intentionally used to frame the opportunity as safe, inclusive and experience-led, broadening the focus beyond traditional late-night or alcohol-based activity to better reflect Kiama's community character and desired visitor experience

Successful implementation will rely on strong collaboration between Council, local businesses and the community. The Strategy provides a framework to guide this collective effort and support coordinated action.

The Strategy's key focus areas and associated actions aim to:

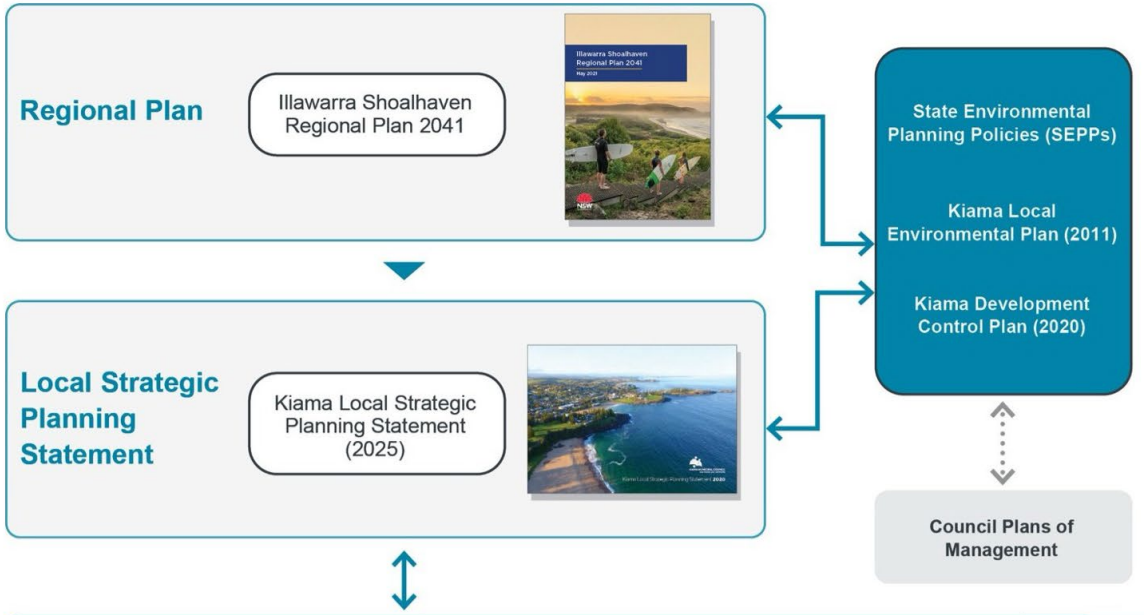
- Reposition Kiama as a vibrant and appealing after-dark destination for both locals and visitors, while protecting the qualities residents value most about the area.
- Diversify the night-time economy by broadening the range of economic, social and cultural activities available outside standard daytime hours.
- Strengthen and support local businesses to improve resilience, sustainability and long-term growth beyond daytime trading.
- Develop distinctive and complementary place identities across town centres within the LGA.
- Enhance the evening environment through thoughtful design, lighting, placemaking and streamlined planning and compliance processes to create a welcoming and safe atmosphere.
- Balance activation with residential amenity, safety and wellbeing.
- Foster collaboration and shared responsibility between Council, businesses, community and stakeholders in shaping and sustaining the after-dark economy.

Methodology

The Strategy has been developed through a robust and evidence-based methodology combining targeted research, benchmarking, place audits (night and day), and extensive stakeholder, business and community engagement. Engagement activities included a discovery workshop with Council, a community pop up at Kiama Farmers Markets, a business stakeholder workshop with 13 attendees, a student survey with 67 responses, and a community survey with 300 responses (the engagement summary can be found below in section 6.0).

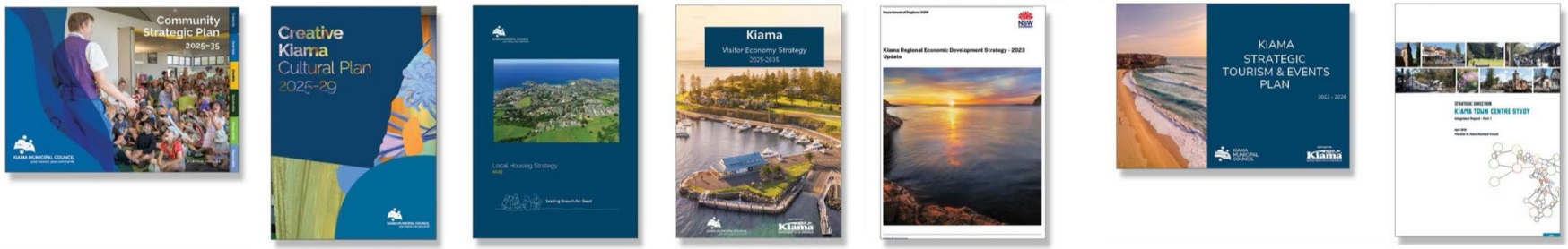
Strategic Alignment

To ensure alignment with local and state government priorities and adherence to best-practice night-time economy planning, this Strategy references the following guiding documents overleaf.



Refer to Appendix 1 for more detail on the strategy's alignment with local and state policy instruments.

Relevant Council's Strategic Document



What is the night-time economy?

Definition of the night-time economy

The Kiama LGA's night-time economy, or "Kiama After Dark", refers to the wide variety of economic, social and cultural activities that take place from late afternoon until dawn, contributing to local life after dark. Currently, it is predominantly focused on leisure, entertainment, hospitality (bars and restaurants), limited retail, transport and related services, and plays a significant and growing role in supporting local businesses, employment, tourism and community connection, while offering clear opportunities for growth and diversification.

The NSW 24-hour Economy Strategy categorises the night-time economy into four distinct time periods: Early Evening (6pm–9pm), Evening (9pm–12am), Night (12am–3am) and Late Night (3am–6am).

For this Strategy, and to better reflect Kiama's unique context, this Strategy has adopted the following time bands:

- **Afternoon / Twilight** (3pm–7pm)
- **Evening** (7pm–10pm)
- Night-Time (10pm–2am): capacity for further testing, subject to appropriate planning, regulatory and place-based controls that may enable expanded activity over time
- Late Night Economy (2am–6am)
- **Early Morning** (6am–9am)

Bold time periods represent the primary focus areas for this Strategy, with the potential to test and expand the Night-Time period subject to appropriate controls, safeguards and demonstrated demand

What is the definition of 'after dark'?

'After dark' refers to activity occurring outside standard daytime hours in Kiama, spanning afternoon/twilight (3–7pm), evening (7–10pm), night-time (10pm–2am) and early morning/dawn activity, and which contributes to local vibrancy, connectivity, economy and community amenity.

Kiama's NTE Maturity

The NSW Night-Time Economy Maturity Framework has classed Kiama as a developing night-time economy, with the establishment of the After Dark Strategy helping to translate vision into tangible actions. At this stage of maturity, the Kiama area can strengthen its evening offering through collaboration with local businesses and key stakeholders, coordinated programming, improved activation of public spaces, and initiatives that encourage a safe, vibrant and diverse after-dark economy. As the after dark economy matures, Council's strategic role will also evolve - transitioning from leadership and facilitation, toward capacity building, and ultimately into a long-term enabling role that supports sustainable growth, industry leadership and shared community outcomes (refer Section 8.0).

Benefits of a vibrant night-time economy

The night-time economy is an important part of Kiama's overall economy, accounting for approximately 38% of Gross Regional Output. A well-functioning night-time economy delivers a broad range of economic, social, cultural and placemaking benefits that could significantly benefit Kiama, including:

- Economic growth and diversification through increased trading hours, higher visitor spend and expanded opportunities for local businesses.
- Job creation and workforce opportunities, particularly in hospitality, tourism, transport, events and creative industries.
- Increased tourism and visitation, supporting destination appeal and encouraging longer stays and repeat visits.
- Enhanced liveability and quality of life for residents through a more active and engaging after-dark environment.
- Greater vibrancy and activation of town centres beyond daylight hours.
- Stronger and more inclusive social connection, providing more opportunities for people to gather, participate and engage in shared experiences after dark, catering to different work patterns, age groups, lifestyles and community needs
- Improved perceptions of safety through increased activity and passive surveillance in well-managed night-time environments.[1]

[1] *Sources:*

- *Kiama Night-Time Strategy: Background Report - prepared by Geografia Pty Ltd, May 2026*
- *CityCompass by Geografia, 2026*
- *Spendmapp by Geografia, 2026*
- *Google Places API, 2026*
- *Tourism Research Australia, 2026*
- *ABS, 2021*

4.0 Understanding Kiama's After Dark Economy

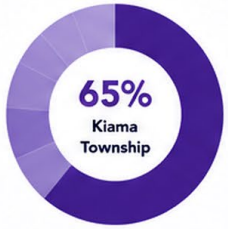
The Kiama Municipality is located on Dharawal Country, spanning 257 square kilometres of coast and hinterland, and featuring iconic geological formations and natural attractions. Ideally positioned within the Illawarra–Shoalhaven region on the NSW South Coast, the Kiama LGA is approximately two hours south of Sydney and three hours north-east of Canberra. The LGA borders the Shoalhaven City Council, Shellharbour City Council and Wingecarribee Shire Council LGAs.

The Kiama CBD functions as the area's primary hub for the night-time economy and visitor/tourism activity, supported by a network of unique villages including Gerringong, Gerroa, Jamberoo, Kiama Downs and Minnamurra. That said, the Municipality also operates within a highly competitive regional context, with nearby centres including Shellharbour, Wollongong, Berry and the broader South Coast and Southern Highlands vying for visitation, hospitality, events and evening economy activity.

The LGA's current identity is founded on a strong daytime and early evening offering across its urban centres, coastal villages and hinterland communities, based on the appeal of its numerous natural attractions and recreational options, as well as a wide range of food & beverage-related experiences. However, with the Kiama township as a central hub, these strong foundations present a clear opportunity to expand and diversify the LGA's night-time economy, especially during the later evening and off-peak periods, supporting increased local spend, reducing economic leakage and driving more sustainable year-round activity.

KIAMA AFTER DARK ECONOMY – KEY INSIGHTS

WHERE NIGHT-TIME SPEND HAPPENS



Kiama Township	65%
Gerringong	12%
Kiama Downs	8%
Jamberoo	7%
Gerroa	5%
Other areas	3%

Kiama township is the primary evening hub and visitor focus.

Secondary centres play a more localised or complementary role rather than functioning as major evening destinations.

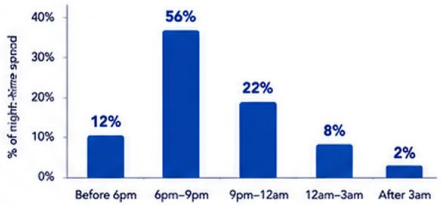
WHO DRIVES THE ECONOMY

Visitors account for ~60% of total night-time spend across the LGA.

In Gerroa and Jamberoo, visitor spending represents over 75% of all evening expenditure.

~70% of visitor night-time spend is in Dining & Entertainment.

WHEN PEOPLE SPEND



Activity is concentrated between 6pm and 9pm, with spending dropping sharply after 9pm and minimal activity after midnight.

RESIDENT SPEND: HIGH LEAKAGE OUTSIDE KIAMA (NON-WORK HOURS)

$58.15M
Spent locally in Kiama

VS

$133.85M
Spent outside Kiama

Kiama residents spend approximately $133.85 million outside the municipality compared to only $58.15 million locally.

Top destinations attracting resident spend:

- Wollongong
- Shellharbour
- Shell Cove
- Berry
- Sydney

This highlights both a reliance on visitors, and a clear opportunity to recapture local demand.

WHAT PEOPLE SPEND ON

Dining & Entertainment	62%
Accommodation	13%
Retail	9%
Transport	6%
Recreation & Culture	5%
Other Services	5%

Hospitality & dining is the core driver of the night-time economy, with other sectors underdeveloped.

OFFER CHARACTERISTICS

- Limited late-night entertainment and retail diversity
- Few venues and discretionary retailers trading after 6pm
- Evening retail mainly consists of supermarkets, convenience, bottle shops and essential services
- Recreation offerings are largely recreational, not nightlife-oriented

VISITOR MARKET

Dominated by families, couples, socially active younger adults and affluent experience-seeking visitors from:

- Adjacent LGAs & intrastate
- Interstate
- Intercity
- International

Visitor Personas

- Social Energisers
- High-Yield Social Consumers
- Twilight Socialisers
- Conservative Daytime Consumers
- Selective Professionals

SEASONALITY

December and January significantly outperform all other months, while winter activity drops substantially.

THE OPPORTUNITY

Expand and diversify the night-time offer, extend trading hours, grow off-peak activity and recapture resident spend to build a vibrant, sustainable after dark economy.

Sources: Kiama Night-Time Strategy: Background Report (Geografia, May 2026) | CityCompass by Geografia, 2026 | Spendmapp by Geografia, 2026 | Google Places API, 2026 | Tourism Research Australia, 2026 | ABS, 2021 | 2025 Night-Time Economy Index –

Kiama's 'After Dark' current state

Kiama's night-time economy is performing strongly relative to comparable regional LGAs, but remains narrow in its composition and under-realised in parts

As a regional coastal LGA, Kiama and its night-time economy perform comparatively well against similar regional LGAs, with:

- Night-time activity accounting for approximately 13% of total expenditure activity across the LGA placing it at the upper end of regional benchmarks
- The night-time economy contributing around 35 – 38% of total economic output, value-add and GRP.
- Strong performance compared with benchmark regional LGAs in NSW and Queensland.
- Visa ranking the broader Illawarra region at 35th nationally (out of 88) in their 2025 Night-Time Economy Index, which measures night spend, business environment, vibrancy and safety/accessibility, placing it ahead of capital and major regional cities such as Hobart, Geelong, Cairns, Ballarat and Ipswich.

However, despite being strong in scale, the economy is:

- heavily concentrated in hospitality and dining,
- highly seasonal,
- strongly visitor-dependent, and
- experiencing substantial leakage of resident spending to nearby centres.

Kiama township overwhelmingly dominates night-time activity, accounting for:

- approximately 65% of all night-time spend,
- the largest concentration of hospitality and entertainment businesses,
- the primary visitor-focused evening economy.

Secondary centres include:

- Gerringong,
- Kiama Downs,
- Jamberoo,
- Gerroa.

These centres currently perform more localised or complementary roles rather than functioning as major evening destinations.

A visitor-driven economy with high leakage

The NTE is heavily driven by visitors rather than residents

- Visitors account for around 60% of total night-time spend across the LGA.
- In some smaller towns such as Gerroa and Jamberoo, visitor spending represents over three-quarters of all evening expenditure.

Visitor spending is overwhelmingly concentrated in dining, hospitality, social and leisure experiences.

Approximately 70% of visitor night-time spend is in Dining & Entertainment categories.

At the same time, resident behaviour shows a significant gap:
Residents are spending heavily outside the LGA ("escape spend")

One of the most important findings is the scale of resident spending leakage. During non-work hours Kiama residents spend approximately $133.85 million outside the municipality, compared to only $58.15 million locally.

Key destinations attracting resident spend include:

- Wollongong,
- Shellharbour,
- Shell Cove,
- Berry,
- Sydney.

This highlights both:

- a reliance on visitors, and
- a clear opportunity to recapture local demand. The after dark economy is strongly concentrated within the afternoon/twilight and early evening periods.

Kiama's NTE is not characterised by a late-night economy. Instead:

- activity is heavily concentrated between 6 pm and 9 pm,
- with spending dropping sharply after 9 pm,
- and minimal activity after midnight.

This early-night pattern aligns with:

- the visitor profile,
- family-oriented tourism,
- older resident demographics,
- Kiama's relaxed coastal identity, and
- hospitality and dining businesses approaches to trading at night.

Dining and hospitality dominate Kiama's current offer

Hospitality is identified as the core driver of the LGA's night-time economy:

Accommodation & Food Services is the largest night-time industry, contributing the highest value-add (at $74m or 26% of total night-time value-add) and employment (at an estimated 1,118 night-time jobs).

Dining & Entertainment accounts for approximately 62% of total night-time spending, which is substantially higher than benchmark LGAs. By contrast, other sectors, including retail, culture, entertainment, wellness, after-hours services, remain underdeveloped.

There is limited late-night entertainment and retail diversity

Within the LGA there is very limited discretionary retail trading after 6 pm, few entertainment venues, and a relatively narrow range of evening experiences.

Most evening retail activity consists of supermarkets, convenience retail, bottle shops, and essential services (such as health, community, public, and professional services that support the functioning of the community), entertainment and recreation activities are dispersed and largely recreational rather than nightlife oriented.

Visitor market

The visitor market is dominated by:

- families,
- couples,
- socially active younger adults,
- affluent “experience-seeking” visitors,
- visitors from adjacent LGAs, intrastate, interstate, intercity and international.

The economy is highly seasonal

Seasonality is a major structural issue:

- December and January significantly outperform all other months,
- while winter activity drops substantially, representing the lowest levels in the calendar year.

This creates clear opportunities for:

- off-peak programming,
- events and festivals,
- indoor and weather resilient entertainment experiences, to smooth demand across the year.

These characteristics inform the strategic focus of this Strategy, which seeks to build on Kiama’s strong foundations while addressing concentration, seasonality and unmet demand.[2]

[2] *Sources:*

- *Kiama Night-Time Strategy: Background Report - prepared by Geografia Pty Ltd, May 2026*
- *CityCompass by Geografia, 2026*
- *Spendmapp by Geografia, 2026*
- *Google Places API, 2026*
- *Tourism Research Australia, 2026*
- *ABS, 2021*
- *2025 Night-Time Economy Index – Visa Australia*

Our community

While the Kiama LGA is geographically small relative to the state average and has a moderate urban density, the region continues to experience steady growth, leading to increases in population and housing demand. While overall the region has an ageing demographic skewed towards 65+, since COVID-19 there has been a noticeable demographic shift, as new housing has become available and opportunities for remote/work-from-home employment have proliferated. This has seen the growth of an emerging cohort of young wealthy families, where one parent may travel to Sydney a few days per week, while the other works locally or from home. As a result, many of these families are seeking creative outlets in their leisure time, providing further reason to invest in a more robust and vibrant night-time economy.

A snapshot of our community

ABS Census 2021

PEOPLE
23,074

Male	48.6%
Female	51.4%
Median age	48

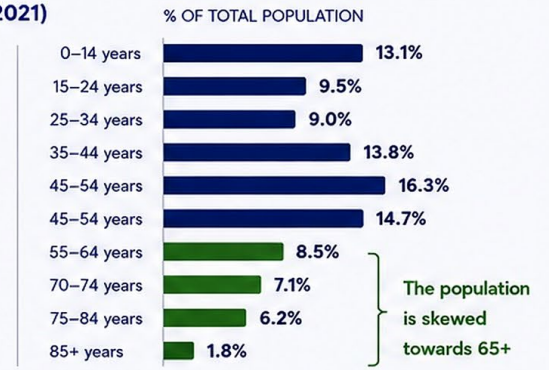
FAMILIES
6,662

Average number of children per family

for families with children	1.9
for all households (a)	0.7

AGE PROFILE (2021)

In 2021, the median age of people living in Kiama was **48**



NOTABLY

In 2021, the median age of people living in Kiama was 48 years. Of the 23,080 residents in Kiama in 2021, the population is skewed towards 65+:

- **8.5%** were aged 65–69 years
- **8.1%** were aged 60–64 years
- **7.1%** were aged 70–74 years

KEY INDICATORS

POPULATION CHANGE
1,249

+0.6%

compound annual growth rate (2015–2025)

More people call Kiama home in 2025 compared to 2015.

EMPLOYMENT
1,585

Kiama residents work in Health Care and Social Assistance, the region's largest employer in 2021.

GROSS REGIONAL PRODUCT
$1.833 billion

Kiama's economy continues to grow, contributing to the prosperity of the Illawarra region.

Gross Regional Product has increased steadily over the past 5 years and is now 1.833 billion.

BUILDING APPROVALS
$90.209 million

New housing approvals reflect continued investment, while building approvals are at their lowest since 2019–20.

(a) Includes all households, including lone person households and couple-only households.

Source: ABS – Census of Population and Housing, 2016, 2021 and ERP, 2021

5.0 Community and Stakeholder Engagement

The Kiama Night-Time Economy Strategy engagement program was designed in alignment with Government benchmarks and industry best practice to be clear, accessible and locally grounded, ensuring the development of a night-time economy strategy that reflects Kiama's character, while also supporting practical implementation and decision-making.

The engagement findings are the result of extensive consultation with Council and local residents, workers, business owners, visitors, and community organisations. This input has been vital in identifying key themes and shaping a vision for a vibrant, inclusive, and safe evening and night-time environment that reflects the needs of everyone who lives, works, visits or provides essential services for Kiama.

Consultation Period

April 2026 – 29 May 2026

How the community was engaged

Community consultation

- Dedicated Your Say Page
- Online survey | Media release
- Social Media posts (13K reach – FB + IG)
- 2000 postcards distributed across the LGA
- Article in The Bugle newspaper
- Community pop-ups (IGA Gerringong + Kiama Farmers Market)
- Business Workshop – 13 business representatives attended
- Youth engagement – 67 responses received

Staff consultation

- Cross-departmental staff workshop
- Various meetings with executives and key staff members
- Called for submissions on the Draft Strategy

Committee consultation

- Tourism and Economic Advisory Committee engagement on strategy pillars

How community got involved

Aware via the Bugle Newspaper	Website visitors	Pop-up participants	Survey responses	Contributions from Business Workshop participants	Local businesses engaged with	NTE database signups
7,500+	634	200+	300+	200+	30+	155

Youth Engagement

67
responses received
from young people aged
12–18

Council led a youth engagement activity with students from Kiama High School during May 2026.

A short survey was presented to class members aged 12–18.

KEY FINDINGS AND THEMES

Feeling safe at night

Most young people reported feeling safe or mostly safe in the Kiama area at night.

Travel outside Kiama

A large proportion of respondents still travel outside Kiama at night because there is 'more to do' in locations outside the LGA.

Most common evening activities

Included "hanging out with friends at beaches/ parks" or simply "going home due to limited entertainment options".

What young people want more of

Strong support for more live music, night markets, food trucks, youth-focused activities, and venues staying open later.

Key concerns around safety

- Lack of people around
- Trouble / bad behaviour
- Limited lighting
- Not enough venues being open

> Young people in Kiama feel generally safe at night, but still travel elsewhere for more to do. They want more to see, do and experience in their own community.

What we heard

Key insights gained through the engagement, across the multiple touchpoints outlined above, included:

- Kiama's night-time economy is widely perceived as underdeveloped
- Strong community support exists for increased after-dark activity
- Residents want more diverse, non-alcohol-focused experiences
- Need to focus on early evening economy rather than late-night nightlife
- Priority should be given to community-friendly, social, outdoor experiences
- Young people generally feel safe in Kiama at night, but want more local evening options, including live music, night markets, food trucks and youth-focused places to gather.

What the community wants to see

- More places and venues open after 9pm
- More for youth to do
- Intergenerational / family friendly offers and venues
- Better utilisation and activation of parks
- More live music
- Better transport and parking
- Greater frequency of outdoor events and activations, at night
- Feeling safe at night
- Youth-focused activities, at night

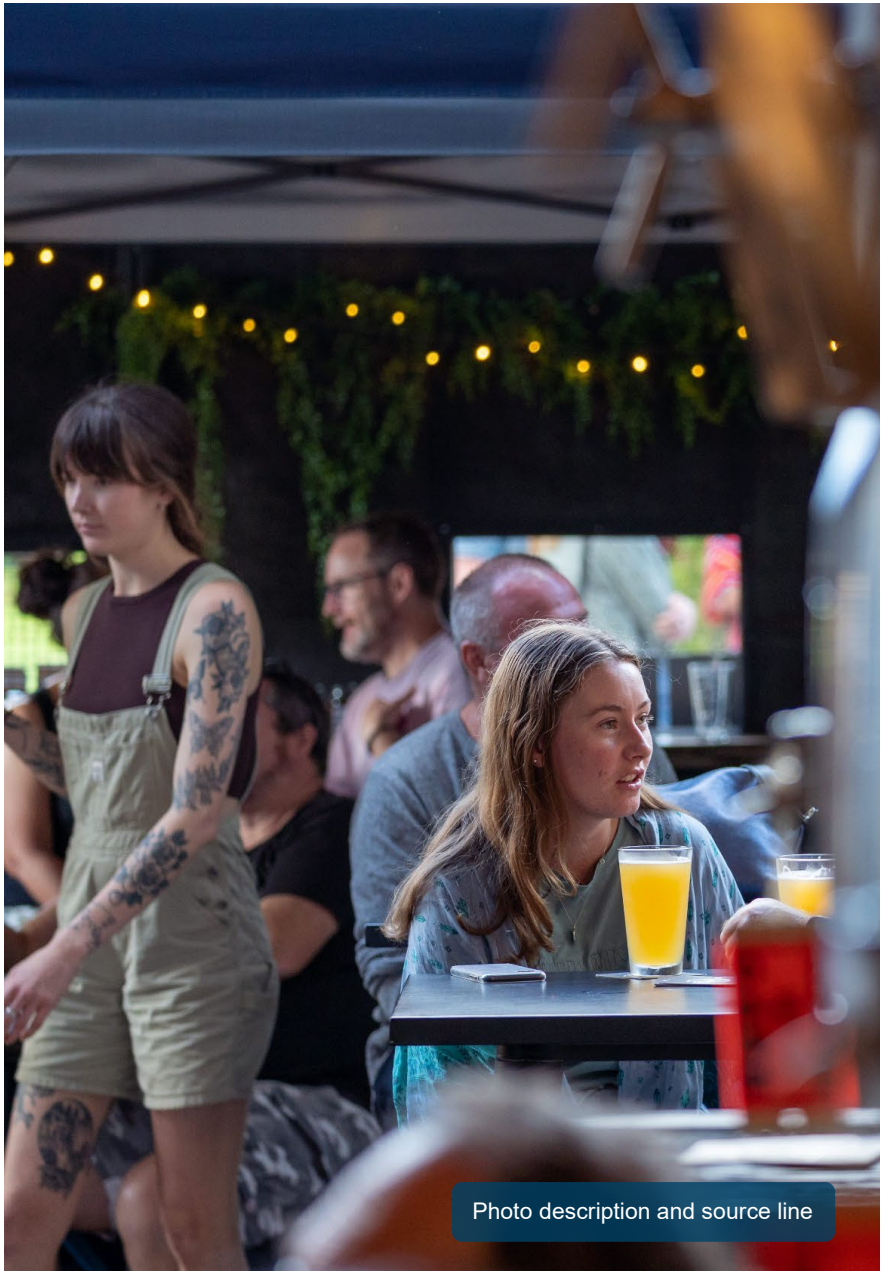


Photo description and source line

Opportunities for growth

Live Music & Entertainment

Vibrant experiences that bring our community together.

Markets / Festivals

Support local, celebrate culture and bring people together.

Tourism / Visitation Initiatives

Attract visitors and showcase our unique destinations.

Free / Low-cost Programming

Accessible events and activities for everyone.

Youth Programming

Engaging opportunities that inspire and build our future.

Transport Improvements

Better connections and safer, more convenient travel.

F&B Improvements

Great food experiences that strengthen our local economy.

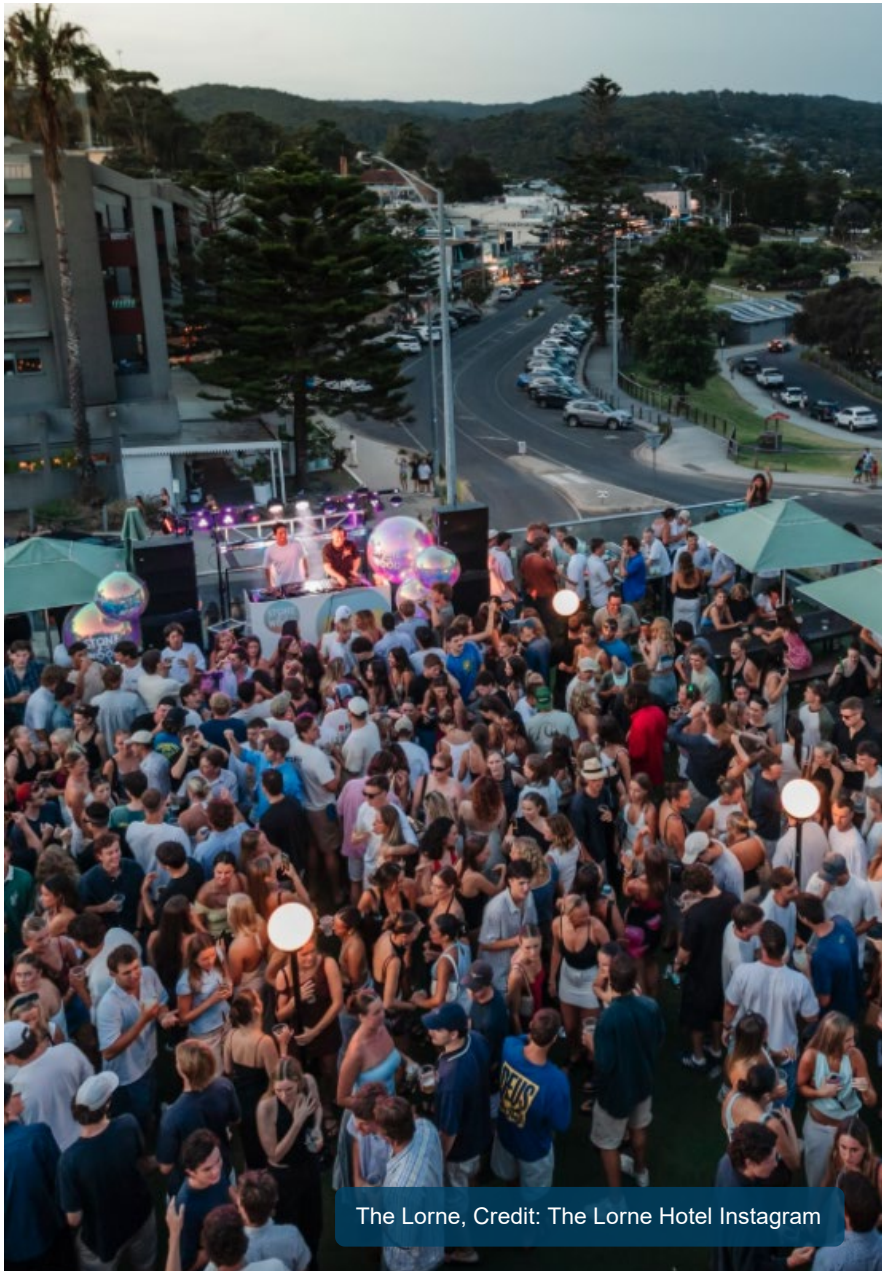
Place-based Approach

A unique, place-based approach to planning, investment and activation.

6.0 Learning from Other Places

Lorne, VIC

Location	Surf Coast Shire, Great Ocean Road, approximately two hours south-west of Melbourne
Population	1,327 permanent residents (2021 census), median age 56, with 1,700+ private dwellings the majority of which are non-permanent
Economic Base	Tourism, hospitality, retail and construction. The Surf Coast Shire economy is supported by an annual output exceeding $3.5 billion (Remplan, 2023)
Land manager	Most foreshore land is Crown land managed by the Great Ocean Road Coast and Parks Authority (GORCAPA), established under the Great Ocean Road and Environs Protection Act 2020
Planning context	Tourism, hospitality, retail and construction, with approximately 20 per cent of employed residents working in accommodation and food services. The Anglesea to Lorne corridor was identified as a top-10 area in Australia for COVID-era job losses, with 52.9 per cent of businesses accessing JobKeeper
Relevance to Kiama	A small coastal town with a mature, event-anchored after-dark proposition built incrementally over decades through programming rather than large-scale infrastructure investment



The Lorne, Credit: The Lorne Hotel Instagram

Enclosure 1 **Item 15.2**

Lorne is a long-established holiday destination whose character is defined by the meeting of the Otway Ranges and the Southern Ocean, the foreshore reserve along Mountjoy Parade, and a tightly walkable village core. The visitor economy expands significantly during summer and long weekends, and the town serves as a primary cultural anchor on the eastern Great Ocean Road between Torquay and Apollo Bay. The COVID-19 pandemic exposed Lorne's seasonal dependency, with the Anglesea–Lorne corridor identified among the top 10 areas in Australia for job losses. Recovery has been led by tourism reactivation alongside a reframing of the foreshore and pier under Great Ocean Road Coast and Parks Authority stewardship.

Lorne's after-dark economy is built around a sustained and collaborative program of events, delivered by a mix of local businesses, community organisations and event operators, rather than through regulatory change or large-scale capital projects. Anchor events, a flexible foreshore public realm, and a compact, walkable village core help retain visitors into the evening across much of the year. The Lorne Business and Tourism Association (LBTA) acts as a coordination and advocacy body, working between operators, Surf Coast Shire, and in partnership with Great Ocean Road Regional Tourism to support delivery and promotion.

Enclosure 1 **Item 15.2**

Milton, NSW

Location	Shoalhaven LGA, on the Princes Highway between Ulladulla and Mollymook, on the New South Wales South Coast
Population	Approximately 1,500 residents, supported by a wider South Coast catchment of more than 30,000
Economic Base	Heritage main street retail, food and beverage, cultural venues, accommodation and visitor economy serving the broader Shoalhaven food and arts ecosystem
Funding context	Selected in March 2026 as one of ten regional NSW areas to receive a $200,000 grant under the NSW Regional Night-Time Economy Program, administered by the Office of the 24-Hour Economy Commissioner
Relevance to Kiama	The most directly comparable example, Milton is addressing the same day-to-night trade gap under the same NSW Government policy framework, demonstrating a live, locally relevant model for coordinated after-dark activation.

Milton provides a strong example of how a small regional centre can leverage its existing character, cultural assets and business base to strengthen early evening activity through coordinated, place-based activation.

Milton sits 6 kilometres inland from Mollymook and Ulladulla on the Princes Highway, at an elevation of 76 metres. The village is recognised regionally for its intact colonial heritage main street, a refined culinary scene, and a year-round cultural calendar anchored by Milton Theatre. The wider South Coast region has emerged as a recognised culinary and cultural destination, and Milton has a growing reputation as a creative and ‘foodie’ weekend destination from Sydney and Canberra. Despite this strong daytime and weekend trade, Milton has

Cupitt’s Estate, Melton, Credit: Cupitt’s Estate’s Google Photos

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historically experienced a sharp drop in foot traffic and spend in the early evening outside of festival weekends.

In response, Milton has adopted a collaborative, business-led approach to strengthening its after-dark economy through the “Twilight Together” program, a 12-month initiative supported by a $200,000 NSW Government grant. Led by Business Milton Ulladulla in partnership with more than twelve local businesses codesigned activations. Rather than focusing on late-night activity, Milton’s approach targets the early evening period (approximately 6–9pm), aligning with its visitor profile and existing strengths. The program integrates a range of complementary activation measures, including:

- Laneway and alleyway activation, using lighting, seating and temporary interventions to create new, small-scale gathering spaces
- Family and community-focused events on accessible public spaces such as the Village Green
- Integration with Milton Theatre, aligning pre- and post-show dining and trading hours to create a coordinated evening experience
- Realignment of trading hours, ensuring venues open and operate cohesively during peak evening periods

These initiatives are designed to work together to create greater density of activity in both time and place, encouraging visitors and residents to stay longer and engage more deeply with the town after dark.

Milton’s approach is further supported by:

- A strong cluster of independent hospitality, retail and cultural venues
- A well-defined and walkable heritage main street
- Partnership funding, including state government support and local philanthropic contributions (Community Bank Milton)
- A strong calendar of events, complemented by regular, smaller-scale activations throughout the year

Importantly, this work is occurring alongside the development of the Milton Ulladulla Bypass, which will reduce through-traffic and further reinforce the need to position the town as a destination rather than a pass-through location.

Milton has several annual events and festivals including the ‘Meet the Maker’ festival, Milton Crawl, Milton Show and the monthly Village Showground Markets.

Milton demonstrates how a coordinated “twilight economy” model, led by local businesses and supported through targeted programming and place-based activation, can successfully convert strong daytime visitation into sustained early evening activity.

Folkestone, Kent (United Kingdom)

Location	Coastal town on the Strait of Dover, Kent, south-east England, 55 minutes from London St Pancras by high-speed rail and the British end of the Channel Tunnel
Population	Approximately 50,000 residents
Economic Base	Creative industries, hospitality, retail, tourism and a working fishing fleet on The Stade
Land manager	Folkestone Harbour Arm and surrounding seafront land owned and operated by the Folkestone Harbour & Seafront Development Company (a private vehicle of Sir Roger De Haan). The Creative Quarter (90+ buildings) is owned and operated by Creative Folkestone, an arts charity. This private ownership of the town's two main after-dark assets is the structural reason the programming is consistent and capital flows the way it does
Funding context	Sustained by an unusual combination of c. £100 million+ of philanthropic investment from Sir Roger De Haan via the Roger De Haan Charitable Trust and FHSDC, layered with a £19.8 million UK Government Levelling Up grant ("Folkestone, A Brighter Future") awarded January 2023 and currently under delivery
Relevance to Kiama	A coastal heritage town that has built a year-round visitor economy over more than two decades, through a deliberate creative-led, model centred on its waterfront, demonstrating how coordinated programming, public art and a re-activated waterfront can extend trade into the evening without relying on a traditional night-time precinct or regulatory framework (such asa Special Entertainment Precinct)

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Folkestone is a coastal town of approximately 50,000 people on the Strait of Dover in south-east England, 55 minutes from London St Pancras by high-speed rail. Cross-Channel ferry traffic peaked through both World Wars and was killed off by the opening of the Channel Tunnel in 1994, with the last ferry sailing in 2000 and leaving the harbour derelict. By the early 2000s Folkestone was a deprived seaside town with structural unemployment, high vacancy and male life expectancy seven years below the national average.

The town's reinvention since 2002 is attributable above all to philanthropist Sir Roger De Haan, who has deployed an estimated £100 million through Creative Folkestone (the arts charity behind the 90-building Creative Quarter, the Quarterhouse and the Folkestone Triennial) and the separate Folkestone Harbour & Seafront Development Company (which owns and operates the reopened Harbour Arm). This is now layered with a £19.8 million UK Government Levelling Up grant ("Folkestone, A Brighter Future") awarded in January 2023 and currently being delivered as a town centre public realm overhaul.

Folkestone's after-dark economy has emerged through a creative-led, harbour-led model, rather than a regulatory or precinct-based approach. The proposition is the emergent product of three parallel programmes:

- Harbour Arm activation, delivered by the Harbour & Seafront Development Company, providing a seasonal mix of food, drink and waterfront experiences
- A curated cultural program, led by Creative Folkestone, including major events such as the Folkestone Triennial alongside year-round programming at Quarterhouse and other venues

A grassroots live music ecosystem, coordinated through local organisations such as Folkestone Music TownTogether, these elements create a layered evening experience, where visitors can move between the waterfront, cultural venues and dining.

While the Harbour Arm attracts significant summer visitation, year-round activity occurs through cultural venues and programming (although with ongoing challenges for independent operators reflected in the closure of venues such as The Chambers in 2024).

The waterfront functions as the centre of the evening economy, with activity extending beyond dining through a coordinated mix of cultural programming, public art, performances and events. This model demonstrates how linked, experience-based activation, rather than a traditional nightlife offer, can support sustained evening activity.

For Kiama, this reinforces the opportunity to leverage its foreshore, harbour and public spaces as the centre of a coordinated twilight economy, extending beyond dining to create connected evening experiences that encourage visitors to stay longer and engage with the town after hours.

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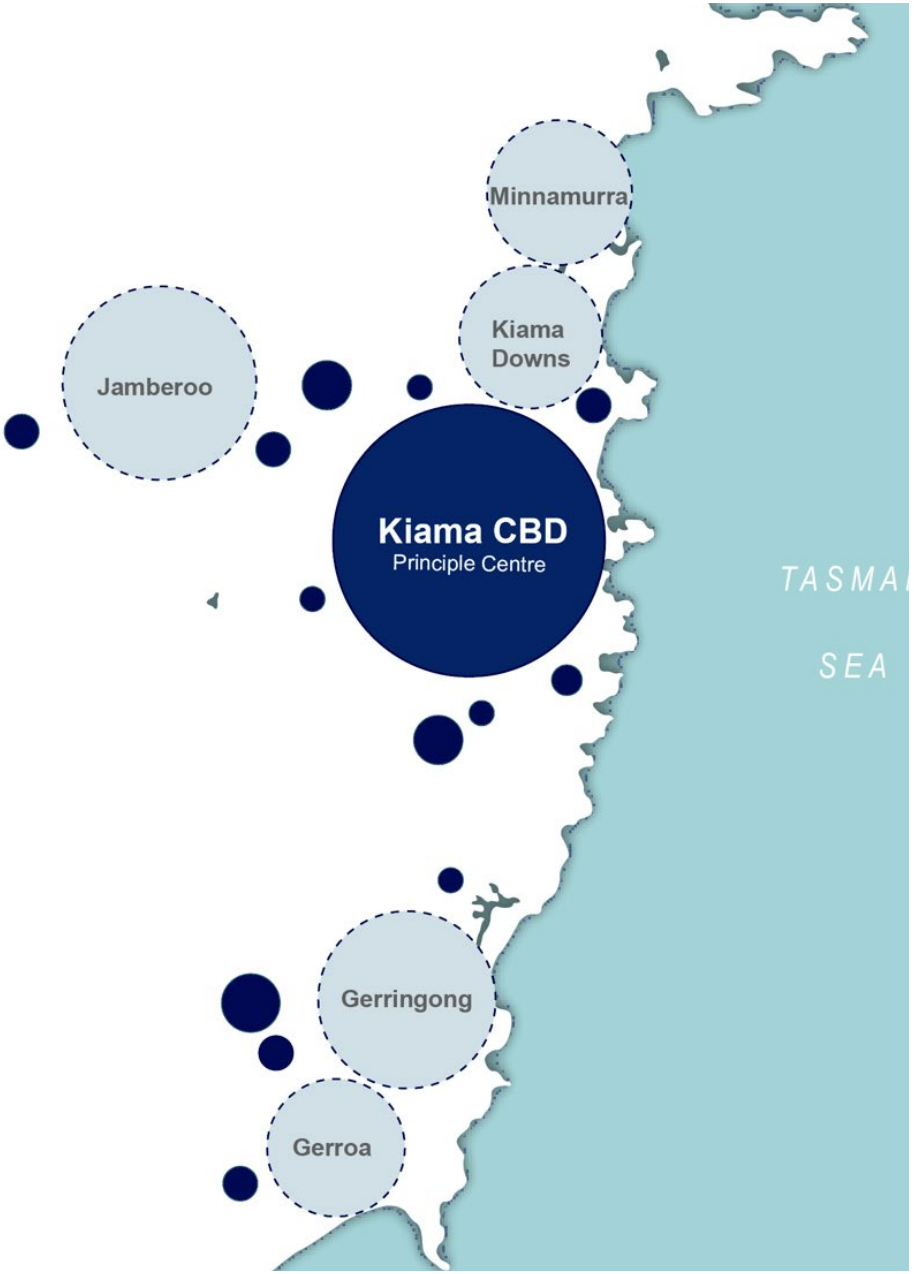
7.0 Strategic Approach

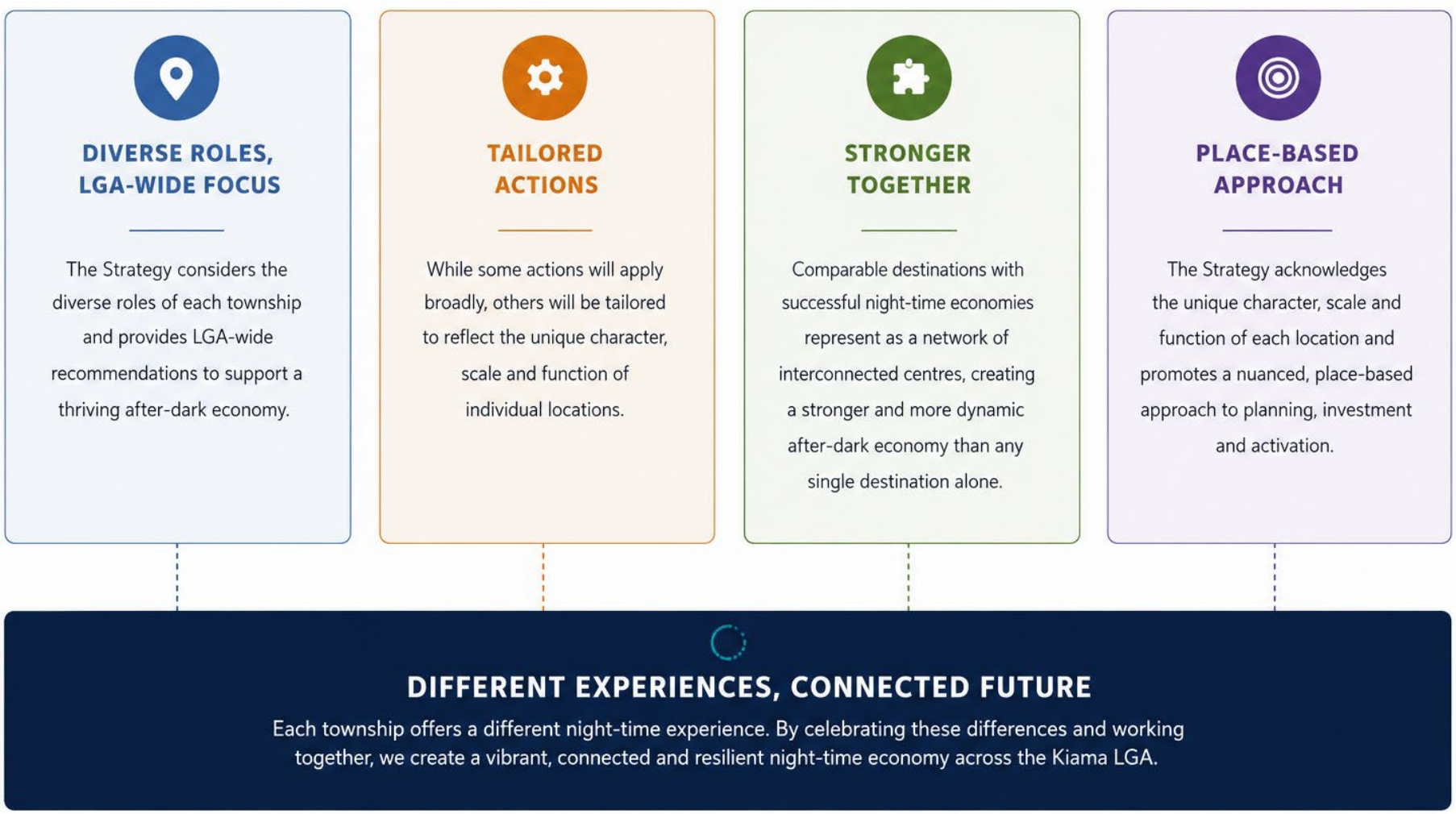
Kiama LGA as a network of connected townships, venues and experiences.

The Strategy recognises the Kiama LGA as a network of connected townships and venues, with Kiama CBD as the principal centre.

The Strategy considers the diverse roles of each township and provides LGA-wide recommendations to support a thriving night-time economy. While some actions will apply broadly, others will be tailored to reflect the unique character, scale and function of individual locations. Comparable destinations with successful night-time economies often operate as a network of interconnected centres, where each location contributes unique experiences that together create a stronger and more dynamic after dark economy than any single destination alone.

Importantly, each township offers a different night-time experience. What defines an evening in the Kiama Town Centre will differ from Gerringong or other townships. The Strategy acknowledges these differences and promotes a nuanced, place-based approach to planning, investment and activation.




DIVERSE ROLES, LGA-WIDE FOCUS
The Strategy considers the diverse roles of each township and provides LGA-wide recommendations to support a thriving after-dark economy.
TAILORED ACTIONS
While some actions will apply broadly, others will be tailored to reflect the unique character, scale and function of individual locations.
STRONGER TOGETHER
Comparable destinations with successful night-time economies represent as a network of interconnected centres, creating a stronger and more dynamic after-dark economy than any single destination alone.
PLACE-BASED APPROACH
The Strategy acknowledges the unique character, scale and function of each location and promotes a nuanced, place-based approach to planning, investment and activation.
DIFFERENT EXPERIENCES, CONNECTED FUTURE
Each township offers a different night-time experience. By celebrating these differences and working together, we create a vibrant, connected and resilient night-time economy across the Kiama LGA.

Strategic focus of this strategy

The strategy has a dual focus on strengthening the LGA's twilight and early evening offer (where demand is already strong), while growing later night trade and the dawn economy, as both present an opportunity area and a way to mitigate leakage to other nearby centres (e.g. Shellharbour, Wollongong).

It also focuses on diversifying offerings at night, beyond dining and entertainment by aligning with more stable sectors (e.g. extended trading for health and fitness, medical and allied health services, libraries, and other community infrastructure)

Primary audiences of this strategy

This strategy considers several primary audiences including:

- Young families
- Young people/youth
- 55+ age groups, with a focus on twilight and early evening activity
- "Social energisers" and high-yield social consumers (to support later trade, events, and multi-day visitation)
- Intergenerational groups
- Visitors – adjacent LGAs, intrastate, interstate, intercity and international visitors

Five key focus areas of our after dark strategy

FOCUS AREA ONE: Collaborative Leadership and Governance

Foster strong collaboration between council, local businesses, community groups, and stakeholders to support a coordinated and well-managed night-time economy.

FOCUS AREA TWO: Planning and Placemaking

Establish a supportive and adaptable regulatory framework that enables a diverse range of evening activities, while prioritising safety, accessibility, and respect for the local environment and community. This focus area also recognises the importance of place-based infrastructure as a critical enabler of vibrant and sustainable night-time experiences.

FOCUS AREA THREE: Vibrancy

Cultivate a vibrant, inclusive, and economically sustainable night-time economy that offers a range of experiences, from dining and entertainment to arts, cultural and recreational activities.

FOCUS AREA FOUR: Connectivity

Enhance transport and walkability (where appropriate) to ensure people can easily and safely access, move through, and engage with Kiama's night-time offerings.

FOCUS AREA FIVE: Identity

Celebrate and strengthen Kiama's unique coastal and hinterland character, heritage, and community, ensuring the night-time economy reflects and enhances its distinct sense of place.

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We all have a role to play

A vibrant After Dark Economy is not delivered by Council alone. It relies on coordinated action across government, business and the community with each playing a distinct role in shaping a safe, welcoming and economically sustainable evening environment.

Successful implementation of the Strategy will rely on strong collaboration between Council, the local business community, and state agencies across all stages of maturity. In the current economic climate, this collaborative approach is essential to maximise strengths, manage financial pressures, and deliver a more efficient and impactful Strategy – and After Dark economy. It will also help ensure the evening and night-time environment remains vibrant, inclusive, and resilient, with the flexibility to adapt to future challenges and opportunities.

In Kiama, Council's role is to enable and support the after-dark economy through:

- strategic direction and coordination
- public domain improvements and place activation
- regulatory settings that balance vibrancy and amenity
- partnerships with state agencies and industry

Local businesses are central to delivery. Hospitality venues, retailers, cultural organisations and event operators are not only participants in the evening economy, but co-deliverers of place outcomes. This includes:

- aligning trading hours to support consistent evening activity
- participating in coordinated activation, events and marketing
- contributing to a shared destination-wide vision
- supporting safe and responsible operating practices

State agencies play a supporting role through:

- policy frameworks and regulatory settings
- funding programs and capacity-building initiatives
- safety, transport and compliance services

A key focus is shared responsibility for place outcomes, including maintaining safe and welcoming night-time conditions through responsible service of alcohol, engagement with local safety initiatives, and collaboration with Council, police and the community on amenity and noise management. Where appropriate, businesses may also participate in precinct-based coordination groups or trading alliances to improve consistency across the evening offer. Over time, this approach supports a shift toward stronger industry leadership, with more business-led coordination of activation, marketing, and events, supported by Council rather than directed by it, enabling a more responsive, locally driven and sustainable model.

Council's overarching strategic role

The table below outlines Council's overarching strategic role across the maturity stages of Kiama's after dark economy. It demonstrates how Council's role is anticipated to evolve from leadership and facilitation to capacity building, and ultimately to long-term enablement.

	1. DEVELOPMENT & ESTABLISHMENT (Foundations)	2. GROWTH & DEVELOPMENT (Building Momentum)	3. MATURITY & SUSTAINABILITY (Thriving & Resilient)
COUNCIL'S OVERARCHING STRATEGIC ROLE	**LEADER & FACILITATOR** Providing strong leadership and facilitation to shape the direction and bring people together.	**CAPACITY BUILDER** Building capacity and strengthening partnerships to enable local leadership and growth.	**ENABLER** Creating the conditions and enabling a sustainable, vibrant after dark economy.
FOCUS	Establish clear direction, build partnerships, and address priority issues.	Build local capability, support business and event development, and streamline processes.	Maintain the strategic, policy and regulatory environment for a sustainable, vibrant after dark economy.
KEY ACTIONS	• Mobilise stakeholders and build shared vision • Advocate for initiatives and investment • Develop plans, policies and frameworks • Address quick wins and early priorities • Lay the foundations for measurement and governance	• Strengthen partnerships across sectors • Enable local leadership and industry-led initiatives • Support business growth and innovation • Facilitate collaboration and precinct coordination • Build data and insights to guide decision-making	• Maintain safe, inclusive and well-managed public spaces • Support innovation, investment and new ideas • Monitor outcomes and adapt based on evidence • Ensure benefits are shared across the community • Champion Kiama as a vibrant night-time dark destination
HOW COUNCIL WORKS	Convenes and collaborates Drives strategy and alignment Leads engagement and advocacy	Builds capability and connections Empowers local leaders and business Facilitates and streamlines	Sets policy and regulatory conditions Provides strategic oversight Enables and supports
SUCCESS INDICATORS	• Shared vision and strategic direction • Active stakeholder engagement • Early initiatives delivered • Foundations for governance in place	• Strong industry and community participation • Increased business and event activity • Improved collaboration and coordination • Growing visitor and local participation	• Sustainable growth and investment • Safe, inclusive and vibrant environment • Positive community outcomes • Kiama recognised as a leading night-time destination

COLLABORATION IS ESSENTIAL

Success relies on strong collaboration between Council, businesses, state agencies, service providers, community groups and advocates at every stage.

Council | Businesses | State Agencies | Community | Advocates | Service Providers

Kiama's After Dark ecosystem

The matrix overleaf provides a visual representation of the key stakeholder groups involved in supporting a vibrant After Dark Economy, including their primary roles, responsibilities, influence and collaboration points.

It highlights the breadth and depth of the ecosystem that underpins a successful after dark economy. The system is highly interconnected, interdependent and relatively complex, with multiple stakeholders influencing outcomes across policy, regulation, programming, infrastructure, safety, transport, place activation and community experience.

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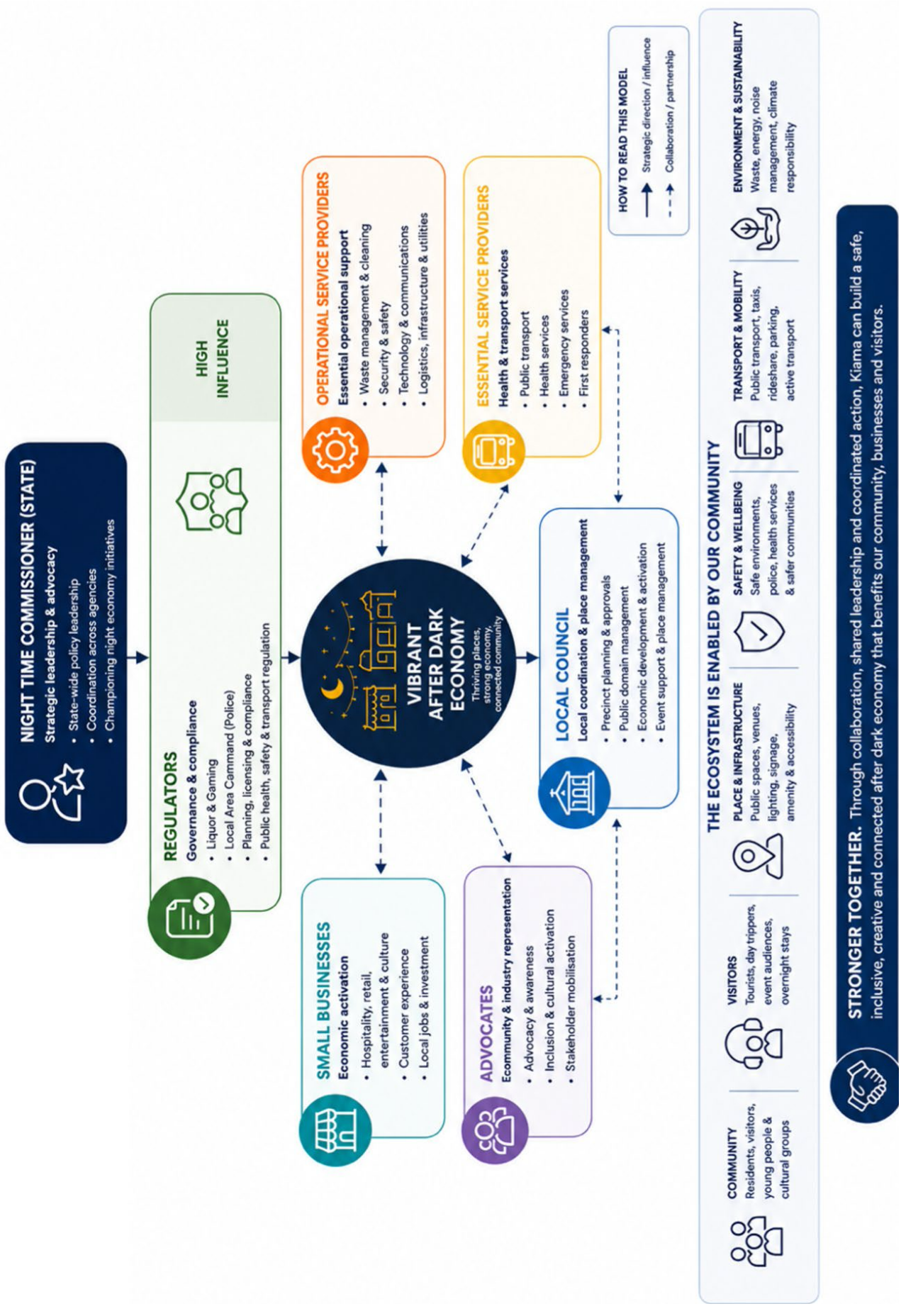

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Implementation plan

To ensure the Strategy remains effective and adaptable, the 10-year strategy has adopted a phased approach to implementation. This includes three key phases of implementation, over three set horizons as follows:

- **Priority Actions (0–2 years)**
- **Short Term Actions (2–5 years)**
- **Future Opportunities (5+ years / investigate)**

This staged approach allows time to implement, monitor, review, and refine actions as Kiama's evening and night-time economy evolves. It ensures the Strategy remains responsive to changing conditions and emerging opportunities.

An iterative process of continuous improvement will support delivery, ensuring actions remain aligned with the vision of a vibrant, safe, and inclusive Kiama after dark.

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Focus Area One: Collaborative Leadership and Governance

Outcome: a well-managed, coordinated, collaborative night-time Economy

Priorities:

- Establish strong governance structures
- Improve cross-sector collaboration
- Strengthen stakeholder communication
- Support evidence-based decision making
- Build long-term industry partnerships

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#	Key Actions	Phasing	Council's Role
1.1	Establish a Night-Time Economy Working Group (NTEWG), that meets regularly across the LGA, in a structured and coordinated way to support cross-business collaboration, knowledge sharing and joint initiatives. The group would provide a forum for ongoing engagement between Council, industry and key stakeholders, while ensuring Council (at least during the early implementation phase) retains appropriate oversight to maintain alignment with the overall Strategy and its intended outcomes.	Priority	Deliver Partner
1.2	Discuss the role of Council's established Tourism and Economic Development Committee, including whether a dedicated sub-committee should be established as the Working Group under Action 1.1, or whether the soon to be established Purple Flag Group could fulfil this role.	Priority	Deliver
1.3	Identify and empower 'After Dark' advocates across both government and industry to champion the night-time economy and support collaboration across sectors in the LGA. While not necessarily forming part of the Working Group, these advocates would play an important role in promoting the Strategy, building partnerships, identifying opportunities, and maintaining momentum for implementation across the LGA.	Short term	Deliver / Partner
1.4	Investigate the development of a collaborative online platform to support partnerships and day-to-day dialogue between local businesses (possibly via simple WhatsApp group) across the LGA, that supports the formal collaboration platforms outlined above.	Short term	Deliver / Partner
1.5	Conduct the Purple Flag accreditation process and investigate NSW Government's Purple Flag Grant Program.	Priority	Deliver
1.6	Continue to cultivate partnerships and collaboration: - with the Kiama Business Network - as well as with other key industry stakeholders, local businesses, neighbouring destination tourism authorities, and other peak industry bodies - and, investigate Kiama Business Network providing a more structured leadership/advocacy role across the LGA to support a vibrant night-time economy – possibly supporting 1.1 and 1.3.	Short term	Deliver / Partner
1.7	Strengthen internal coordination within Council to support a 'whole of Council' approach to delivering 'After Dark' related objectives; - possibly via an internal Council working group responsible for overseeing the implementation and ongoing coordination of the night-time economy strategy, and	Priority	Deliver

	a single-contact point at Council regarding all matters regarding the night-time economy to streamline adopting a "yes, if" response, for business, programming, events and activation.		
1.8	Continue to collaborate with multiple layers of government; - including the NSW 24-Hour Economy Commission to investigate future night-time district cultivation programs (e.g. the Regional Night-time Economy Accelerator Program) to strengthen coordination and activation - and Destination NSW, Destination Sydney Surrounds South (DSSS), Transport for NSW, - as well as join the Night-Time Economy Councils' Committee (NTECC) - a State-wide working group of council staff who collaborate to share insights, build capability, and advocate for vibrant, safe, and sustainable night-time economies.	Priority (ongoing)	Deliver/ Partner
1.9	Regarding data: - Identify and review the data currently collected and stored by Council and relevant stakeholders relating to the night-time economy. - Undertake a gap analysis to determine what data is missing and required to establish a baseline, accurately report on the current and future state of Kiama's night-time economy, and measure the impact and effectiveness of the Strategy over time. - This should include recurring measures of night-time expenditure, resident and visitor spend, town and precinct level performance, expenditure leakages and seasonal variation.	Future	Deliver
1.10	Share insights and findings of the After Dark strategy with community and business engagement through existing business and economic development forums and via the proposed After Dark Working Group.	Future	Deliver
1.11	Conduct a Kiama After Dark Survey annually to measure longitudinal trends, perceptions and Strategy impacts.	Priority	Deliver
1.12	In partnership with local night-time businesses, consider initiatives to improve the capacity of hospitality workers, particularly young people who might be considering hospitality as an employment pathway.	Priority	Deliver Partner

Focus Area Two: Planning and Placemaking

Outcome: well-balanced, place-based night environments

Priorities:

- Establish a supportive planning framework for after dark activity
- Streamline approval pathways for businesses and events
- Balance vibrancy with community amenity and safety
- Strengthen place-based activation across centres and precincts
- Encourage a diverse mix of evening and night-time experiences

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#	Key Actions	Phasing	Council's Role
Planning Actions			
2.1	Trial a Special Entertainment Precinct (SEP) for Kiama CBD that establishes a framework to support enhanced after-dark vibrancy, while balancing the amenity of sensitive receivers within the Kiama Town Centre and surrounding areas. The SEP should align with the aspirations of the Kiama Local Housing Strategy 2025 and respond appropriately to the zoning framework prescribed under the Kiama LEP 2011.	Priority	Deliver
2.2	Review exempt development provisions across private and public land, and communicate these clearly to both internal Council team members and the community to ensure a 'whole of Council' approach to delivering 'After Dark' related objectives	Short term	Deliver
2.3	Amend Kiama LEP to increase exempt activity in outdoor spaces like car parks, noting SEP provisions are not the sole pathway for all exempt approvals	Short term	Deliver
2.4	Prepare clear information guides for the community outlining permitted activities, requirements, and step-by-step processes for After Dark activation and continue to support new pilot place activation ideas, such as parklets and use of other open space via short-term licences	Short term	Deliver
2.5	Investigate opportunities to streamline Council approval process, and capacity build Council staff regarding zoning, acoustics, vibrancy laws, previous approvals to support a collaborative relationship with businesses interested in opening at night, in line with Action 1.7	Short term	Deliver
2.6	Establish a coordinated pre-application and advisory process for After Dark proposals, enabling early alignment between applicants, Council teams, and key stakeholders to reduce risk, avoid delays, and ensure a consistent and transparent approach to assessment coordinated by one group.	Priority	Deliver
2.7	Undertake "activity mix" assessments across the CBD and local centres to identify gaps and better understand venues and experience gaps to retain local spend and reduce leakage.	Future	Deliver

2.8	Investigate opportunities to support the development of additional micro-precincts across the LGA, where clusters of night-time focused businesses and venues can operate and grow. This includes strengthening and supporting existing emerging precincts such as Tingira Crescent and Gerringong West (Rawlins Road), while encouraging greater activation and use of both public and private land during evening and night-time hours.	Future	Deliver Partner Advocate
2.9	Investigate initiatives and planning mechanisms to support licensed premises to hold more live music or other live performance, within the future SEP, in partnership with Sound NSW and Music NSW.	Short term	Deliver Partner
2.10	Support responsible alcohol service and safe venue practices and collaborative relationships with the Police and LAC.	Short term	Partner
Placemaking, Public Domain + Activation Actions			
2.11	Look to improve lighting across key precincts, parks, pathways, and public assets as well as ensure existing lighting treatments are functioning and consistent.	Priority	Deliver Partner
2.12	Investigate the possibility expanding a public art program to enhance the night-time aesthetic of key centres, high streets and areas of the LGA with perceived lower safety levels.	Priority	Deliver Partner
2.13	Consider undertaking an audit of and increasing the safety and availability of public toilets at night.	Priority	Deliver
2.14	Investigate public domain improvements across the LGA that support the twilight economy – e.g. viewing spaces, recreation and dwell spaces to enjoy sunsets.	Short term	Deliver
2.15	Activate the Kiama Harbour and Blowhole Point precinct as a connected evening destination through coordinated public realm improvements, including enhanced lighting (particularly at Blowhole Point), wayfinding, boardwalk connections, public art, interpretation, and night-time experiences that strengthen	Future	Partner Advocate

	links between Manning Street, the Harbour, Fish Markets and Blowhole Point, increase pedestrian activity, and support a vibrant, safe and accessible waterfront after dark.		
2.16	Support a diverse harbourfront food, dining and visitor economy at night, by enabling revitalisation opportunities such as expanded seafood and dining offerings at the Fish Markets, adaptive reuse opportunities within the precinct (including Pilots Cottage), and complementary tourism and wellness experiences that extend visitor dwell time and contribute to Kiama's evening and night-time economy, in partnership with State agencies and landowners.	Future	Partner Advocate
2.17	In line with the Kiama Town Centre Study, consider formalising and upgrading the pedestrian link between Railway Parade and Shoalhaven Street, in the Kiama Town Centre whilst making it a safe thoroughfare at night. Combined with increased opening hours, this improved connectivity would activate this part of the centre and utilise a well-loved community asset.	Future	Deliver
2.18	Consider the delivery of night-time focussed, placemaking incentives for private stakeholders to take up such as façade improvement programs, creative lighting, and subsidised outdoor dining.	Priority	Deliver Partner
2.19	Collaborate with private stakeholders to investigate how to make and support specific improvements to publicly accessible, but privately owned spaces, that abut existing night-time businesses (e.g. service laneways off Terralong St, Kiama and Collins Lane).	Priority	Deliver Partner
2.20	Work with local business to stimulate diversity of retail mix and diversity of night-time, non-alcohol-based offerings such as cinema, gaming etc.	Future	Partner
2.21	Support private stakeholders to improve lighting that abuts public space (e.g. Sebel Hotel and Churches).	Priority	Deliver Partner

Focus Area Three: Vibrancy

Outcome: a vibrant, inclusive, diverse and economically sustainable night-time economy

Priorities:

- Strengthen the diversity, appeal and economic sustainability of Kiama's after dark experiences
- Support arts, culture, entertainment, events and community activation across the LGA
- Encourage greater participation in evening and night-time activity for all ages and audiences
- Increase activation and use of public, community and underutilised spaces after dark
- Grow visitation, destination appeal and overnight economy outcomes through a dynamic year-round after dark offer

#	Key Actions	Phasing	Council's Role
3.1	**Council owned assets, venues and spaces** • Review and simplify Council's public space, venue bookings and event application approvals processes to ensure consistency with the objectives of this strategy. • Review how Council venues, parks and public spaces can be better activated by businesses, community groups and individuals undertaking activities supporting the night-time economy. • In partnership with the State, support the use of schools and other community spaces for night-time activation.	Priority	Deliver
3.2	**Events, festivals and twilight activation** • Support a positive visitor experience and economy through vibrant night-time events, concerts, festivals and programming that attracts repeat intrastate, interstate, intercity and international visitors and supports overnight visitor expenditure. • Encourage and support community led, evening markets, pop-ups and street closures at night in the LGA's public open spaces and high streets. • Consider small-scale, low-cost, regular, outdoor night-time activation of the LGA's high streets such as busking programs or performance programs. • Identify suitable locations and priority zones for permanent or temporary traffic bollards and associated infrastructure to support safe and efficient event delivery, temporary street closures, and after dark activation across the LGA.	Short term	Deliver Partner
3.3	**Grants, funding pathways and capacity building programmes** • Review current KMC community grants program to support creative ideas 'After Dark' • Investigate funding sources to (re)establish an annual Winter Festival and/or establish a 'Summer Streets' programme of street closures, such as Transport for NSW's Open Streets program. • Investigate additional forms of state government funding sources that benefit the LGA's night-time economy, immediately and into the long term.	Priority	Deliver Partner Advocate

	• Commence engagement with the South Coast Arts Alliance strategic partnership with Music NSW to investigate ways in which to increase the level of live music, performance and rehearsal opportunities in the LGA. • Encourage local businesses to partake in the NSW Live Performance Venue Accelerator Program, to support the establishment of more and capacity building of existing, live music and performance venues across the LGA.		
3.4	**Business capacity building and support** • Develop an LGA wide, 'how-to' guide for activations, events, live music, popup and mobile, low impact venues. • Support businesses that do not traditionally serve alcohol, such as arts and cultural, recreation and retail-based businesses, to extend trade into evening hours. • Investigate working with local business to ideate in-venue festivals, 'trail' and street festival programming. • Increase the number of businesses operating at night through a targeted incentives and support program, particularly to support 6-9pm business participation, focused on early dining, wellness, retail, recreation and family activity. • In partnership with landlords and owner occupier businesses, explore how to activate vacant shopfronts at night, through pop-ups or lighting treatments. • Work with surf living saving clubs and other members clubs across the LGA, to investigate ways to increase offerings in evenings, early mornings and at night as well as event and function capabilities.	Short term	Deliver Partner
3.5	**Youth and children community programming** • Work with local schools/youth groups to create more After Dark youth events for under 18-year-olds. • Investigate the feasibility of reestablishing a youth and young people advisory committee, ensuring youth representation in the After Dark Working Group, possibly via collaborating with the NSW Office for Youth. • Or identify other appropriate mechanisms to capture and incorporate these important voices into the planning and delivery of Kiama's after dark economy. • Investigate ways to improve and increase family and child-based night-time and evening programming opportunities and dedicated spaces.	Short term	Deliver

Focus Area Four: Connectivity

Outcome: ensure people can easily and safely access, move through and engage with Kiama's night-time offerings

Priorities:

- Improve connectivity and movement across the LGA after dark
- Strengthen public, private and alternative transport options
- Enhance safety and accessibility across transport routes and public spaces
- Improve wayfinding and navigation across centres and precincts
- Support greater participation in after dark activity through improved transport and access solutions

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#	Key Actions	Phasing	Council's Role
4.1	Continue to advocate Transport for NSW and other relevant agencies in order to improve frequency of and access to public transport access.	Priority	Advocate
4.2	Investigate improving the physical night-time safety of transport nodes and interchanges through lighting and other forms of infrastructure.	Short term	Deliver
4.3	Undertake a safety audit of pedestrian crossings at night, with the intent of increasing the number of safe, well-lit pedestrian crossings across the LGA, at night.	Short term	Deliver
4.4	Develop and implement improved digital and physical wayfinding solutions in town centres that supports; - an active and safe night-time economy - the visitor economy (possibly via translation for overseas tourists) - promotion of local business at night - access to real-time transport information for commuters at train and bus stations.	Short term	Deliver Partner
4.5	Investigate the feasibility of investing in a kit of temporary road closures barriers and Variable Message Signs (VMS) that reduce the cost of seasonal night-time road closures, thereby encouraging more community-led activation at night.	Short term	Deliver
4.6	Explore the possibility of expanding private shuttle buses and other alternative private transport options within the LGA.	Priority	Partner / Advocate
4.7	Consider strategic engagement with ride-share platforms to help support incentivised expansion into the LGA and investigate ways in which to re-establish an LGA taxi service.	Priority	Partner / Advocate
4.8	Work with local hospitality venues, high schools and police to encourage safe driving at night, to and from premises as well as the use of use of other safe, active transport options at night.	Ongoing	Partner / Advocate

Focus Area Five: Place Identity

Outcome: strengthen Kiama After Dark's place identity and positioning, ensuring the night-time economy reflects and enhances its distinct sense of place.

Priorities:

- Strengthen Kiama's unique after dark identity, character and sense of place
- Promote a distinctive and authentic after dark narrative across the LGA
- Improve awareness, visibility and promotion of after dark experiences and activity

Enclosure 1 **Item 15.2**

#	Key Actions	Phasing	Council's Role
5.1	Develop a distinctive place identity for Kiama through a strong and authentic narrative that reflects the area's First Nations stories, village atmosphere, culture and distinctive natural environment.	Priority	Deliver
5.2	Establish a Kiama After Dark brand strategy and communications strategy as well as promotional materials to support broader, strategic marketing of the region's night-time economy.	Priority	Deliver
5.3	Review existing Council communications channels and create a 'Kiama After Dark' dedicated page on Council's website, providing: - guidance and 'how to' guides for businesses, trading hours and policies (as per action items 3.3). - support for coordinated promotion of LGA-wide night-time events and activity - a dynamic events calendar - content for personas through specifying offerings that align with family-friendly, youth/under-18, early dining, live music, wellness, coastal walks/viewing and other early evening/late evening social options.	Short term	Deliver
5.4	Investigate other platforms to provide coordinated marketing and promotion of night-time activity and venues operating After Dark across the LGA, including but not limited to: - newsletters - notice boards at libraries and council owned assets - small-scale, branded window decals highlighting businesses that operate at night, consistently across the LGA. - other digital platforms	Short term	Deliver Partner
5.5	Review how Kiama Business Network can more strategically support promoting the Kiama After Dark identity.	Priority	Partner
5.6	Integrate Kiama 'After Dark' marketing into broader destination marketing campaigns at a regional, local and state level via DSSS and other privately operated media outlets.	Short term	Deliver/ Partner

5.7	Work closely with local media outlets to promote businesses open at night, and After Dark activity across the LGA, to improve perceptions in the community of a strong early-night, family-friendly, visitor and resident-servicing economy.	Short term	Advocate /Partner
5.8	Identify commercial funding partnerships or sponsorships with night-time orientated brands, that may assist in improving identity and general marketing of After Dark activity across the LGA.	Short term	Partner

Priority Focus Areas

Considering the five core focus areas and their phasing horizons, the following are the strategy's priority focus areas:

- Establish an LGA wide, After Dark Working Group
- Trial a Special Entertainment Precinct (SEP) in the Kiama town centre
- Improve lighting and safety in key areas (in line with Purple Flag accreditation)
- Develop an After Dark place identity, brand and communications strategy
- Support extended trading hours, business participation and labour pool capacity building
- Identify additional state funding opportunities that support our night-time economy
- Implement a twilight activation program in partnership with local businesses
- Review how Kiama Business Network can more strategically support promoting Kiama After Dark
- Advocate for a range of increased, reliable transport options across the LGA
- Look to improve lighting across key precincts, parks, pathways, and public assets

8.0 Evaluation, Monitoring and Continuous Improvement

Ongoing monitoring and evaluation will be essential to understanding the effectiveness of the Strategy and ensuring actions remain responsive to changing community expectations, industry conditions and emerging opportunities. The Strategy adopts an iterative and adaptive approach, enabling actions and priorities to evolve over time based on evidence, performance and feedback.

Monitoring will support evidence-based decision making, continuous improvement and adaptive management across all stages of the after dark economy's maturity.

Key performance indicators

Success will be measured across a range of economic, social and place-based indicators, including:

Economic Activity and Business Participation

- Number and diversity of businesses operating after dark
- Extended trading hours and business participation
- Investment, employment and economic activity

Vibrancy and Activation

- Event numbers, attendance and participation rates
- Cultural programming and live music activity
- Public space activation and utilisation

Visitor Economy

- Visitor numbers and overnight stays
- Visitor expenditure and length of stay

Community Experience and Safety

- Community perceptions of safety and vibrancy
- Safety incidents, complaints and amenity trends

Access and Connectivity

- Public transport and mobility usage
- Participation across different locations and demographics

Collaboration and Delivery

- Stakeholder participation and partnerships
- Grant funding and external investment secured

Methods of evaluation

Progress will be tracked through a combination of quantitative data collection and ongoing stakeholder engagement, including:

Community and Industry Feedback

- Conduct the Kiama After Dark Survey annually to measure longitudinal trends, perceptions and Strategy impacts
- Hold Kiama After Dark progress workshops bi-annually to review progress, identify emerging issues and refine strategic approaches
- Throughout the SEP trial period, undertake regular check-in sessions with businesses, residents and community stakeholders
- Consider conducting annual community safety and perception surveys

Regular Monitoring and Reporting

- Monitor business participation, trading patterns and activation outcomes across centres and precincts
- Review event attendance, visitation and public space usage data
- Monitor complaints, safety incidents and amenity-related trends
- Regularly review implementation progress against actions, priorities and delivery timeframes
- Undertake periodic review of the Strategy to ensure ongoing relevance and alignment with community and industry needs

Targeted Program Evaluation

- Undertake regular check-in sessions during the Special Entertainment Precinct trial
- Evaluate specific programs, activations and pilot initiatives
- Review implementation progress against actions and priorities
- Undertake periodic Strategy reviews to ensure ongoing relevance and alignment

Reporting

Findings from monitoring and evaluation will be shared biannually with the Tourism, Economic Advisory Committee, Council, industry and the community to support transparency, accountability and continued collaboration.

Appendix 1 – Policy Alignment

Consistency of the draft Night-time Economy Strategy against relevant plans and polices is outlined below.

PLAN	RESPONSE
Illawarra Shoalhaven Regional Plan 2041 *Prepared by: NSW Department of Planning, Industry and Environment (now the Department of Planning, Housing and Infrastructure)*	
This Regional Plan provides for a 20-year land use strategy (to year 2041) for the Illawarra – Shoalhaven region. It outlines a strategic vision and direction for the region and with respect to housing growth, jobs, infrastructure and providing for a healthy natural environment. It applies to the local government areas of Wollongong, Shellharbour, Kiama and Shoalhaven. It informs the directions of land use planning to create for an overall connected, sustainable, and vibrant Illawarra-Shoalhaven region. The regional plan is based on themes. These are: • A productive and innovative region • A sustainable and resilient region • A region that values people and places • A smart and connected region Within these themes there are objectives, and strategies, to achieve. Of relevance to the Night-time Economy Strategy are the following themes: • A productive and innovative region; and • A region that values people and places. These are discussed further below.	See responses below.

Regional Plan theme: a productive and innovative region	
The vision under this theme is noted (in part): 'The Illawarra Shoalhaven will leverage new and innovative economic opportunities to increase the number of jobs in knowledge services, health, research, advanced manufacturing, defence and the *visitor economy*'. Corresponding objective under this is:	• The Night-time Economy Strategy provides a framework to appropriately plan for the growth of the after dark economy of Kiama, supporting initiatives to enhance night-time experiences.
Objective 5: Create a diverse visitor economy The tourism/visitor economy is a key aspect of the Illawarra and Shoalhaven region, due to the attractions of characterful towns and places, key natural features, food and drink offerings, and events. Continuing to support and sustain this is identified by the plan. Corresponding strategy 5.1 of this objective of the regional plan notes: *'Create an environment for a diverse visitor economy. Strategic planning and local plans should consider opportunities to:* • *…* • *support the development of places for artistic and cultural activities; and* • *support appropriate growth of the night-time economy* • *…'* *(Emphasis)*	• Enhancing the night-time economy provides opportunity to support the appropriate development of places, increasing diversity, and enhancing experiences for both visitors and the community.
Objective 6: Activate the region's harbours to promote a blue highway *Within this objective, maritime related tourism is to be enhanced in the region. The Kiama Harbour Revitalisation Framework prepared by Transport for NSW is identified to guide investment in the Kiama Harbour and improve the marine experience for maritime users and the broader community. A land use priority of the Kiama Revitalisation Framework is to:* *'3.d Spread and lengthen the visitation to the harbour through all seasons and times of day'*	• The Night-time Economy Strategy provides a framework to plan for after dark vibrancy across the locality. • Waterside areas may be part of future vibrancy exercises for the locality.

A related action of this priority in the revitalisation framework is: *'Explore appropriate balance of new activities which will ensure a night-time economy, increased visitation during current off-seasons and increase overnight stays'* *Corresponding strategy 6.1 of this objective in the regional plan notes to:* *'Activate the region's harbour and ports as well as their related commercial areas in strategic planning and local plans'*	
Objective 7: Response to the changing nature of retail *The retail sector is noted in the Regional Plan as the second largest sector of employment in the Illawarra-Shoalhaven Region. This objective notes the evolution of the retail sector, and the importance of diversifying uses and activities to continue to support.* *Corresponding strategy 7.1 notes:* *'Respond to the changing nature of retail. Strategic planning and local plan should consider opportunities to:* • *Provide flexibility and facilitate a broad range of commercial, business and retail uses within centres'*	• The Night-time Economy Strategy provides framework to support enhanced evening retail activity in appropriate locations. • This supports to diversify the retail economy of Kiama, which is particularly daytime orientated, providing benefits to the community, including jobs and enhanced retail amenity.

Regional Plan theme: A region that values people and places

The vision under this theme includes to increase housing supply in appropriate locations. In addition, increasing the amenity of places and their vibrancy through enhancements to the night-time economy.

Objective 18 under this theme identifies to provide for housing supply in the right locations, especially with established infrastructure. Kiama is noted as a strategic centre and where housing increases would mostly occur through in-fill development (to protect the locality from increased urban sprawl).

As noted further below, increasing housing in existing centres, such as the Kiama Town Centre, is outlined by separate plans.

In addition, Objective 24 under this theme of the regional plan for:

'A place with night-time activity can be dynamic and contribute to the local economy. These places are usually mixed-use centres with adequate noise control, appropriate operating hours, and safe late-night travel options. A fun and safe night-time economy meets the social and recreational needs of shift workers, young people, tourists and visitors'.

Corresponding strategy 24.1 under notes:

'Support public art, major events and cultural activities. Strategic planning and local plans should consider opportunities to:

…

- *Support the night-time economy'*

- The Night-time Economy Strategy supports after dark vibrancy for Kiama.
- As part of enabling this, the strategy identifies a 'Special Entertainment Precinct (SEP)', for the Kiama Town Centre.
- A Special Entertainment Precinct (which would be legislated in the Kiama LEP 2011) provides a management framework to support enhanced after dark activity, balanced with maintaining sound amenity to residents and other sensitive receivers located within and around.
- The Night-time Economy Strategy therefore supports for vibrancy to be appropriately managed in locations, and for where additional housing is planned for the municipality, such as the Kiama Town Centre.
- This supports to appropriately enhance the local economy, providing for benefits to the community, whilst also protecting the amenity for residents and occupants.

Kiama Local Strategic Planning Statement (2025 update) *Prepared by: Kiama Council*	
The Kiama Local Strategic Planning Statement (LSPS) provides for a 20-year land use planning vision to manage the growth of Kiama, balanced with respecting both its character and the environment. It aligns to the Illawarra-Shoalhaven Regional Plan (outlined above) and supports to give effect to this regional plan at the local area level. The LSPS is based on land use planning themes, with various actions and planning priorities (PP) within. These are: 1. Manage sustainable growth 2. Develop a diverse and resilient economy 3. Protect rural landscapes 4. Mitigate and adapt to climate change and protect the environment 5. Foster vibrant and accessible places Themes 2 and 5 are considered relevant to the Night-time Economy Strategy.	• See below
<u>*Theme 2 'Develop a diverse and resilient economy'*</u> The economic vision under the Regional Economic Development Strategy (REDS) 2023 is: *'To be a strong vibrant economy outside of current holiday peaks with carefully managed growth and employment opportunities in tourism, agribusiness and other emerging industries and to capitalise on the region's unique opportunities in digital connectivity'* A strong vibrant economy is therefore sought, including with managed growth in tourism and other emerging industries. Planning priorities focused to this theme are: • PP5 – Foster economic diversity • PP6 - Manage tourism development and visitor economy • PP7 – Strengthen commercial centres. Most relevant priority to the planning proposal is PP6 – *Manage tourism development and visitor economy* and PP7 – *Strengthen commercial centres.*	• It also supports for visitors/tourists to stay longer in Kiama and therefore increase overnight visitor expenditure. • It will improve amenity for the Kiama community. • The Night-time Economy Strategy also supports to consider implementation of relevant recommendations of the Kiama Town Centre Study, where feasible and practical, to enhance public domain atmosphere at night and the benefits that this brings including a sense of safety.

The relevant action under PP6 Manage tourism development is: *'Drive tourism growth beyond its current seasonal peak and develop opportunities that will grow <u>overnight visitor expenditure</u>'* The relevant action under PP7 – Strengthen commercial centre is: *'Develop and enact an implementation strategy for the Kiama Town Centre Study recommendations that relate to Council assets, road networks etc'* Of note, the recommendations include: *Night-time economy* *Audit of current night-time venues in the centre incl. operating hours of facilities and businesses and occurrence of temporary events in public and private places such as outdoor cinema, evening/ night markets, live music performances and the like. Investigation into potential to extend opening hours of library'* *Night-time atmosphere* *'Audit of current lighting and CPTED/ Safer By Design assessment; Identification of additional areas (i.e. pedestrian links, laneways), built form landmarks and landmark trees for priority (up-) lighting; Consultation with private building owners where applicable (i.e. heritage buildings)'*	
<u>Theme 5: Foster Vibrant and Accessible Places</u> This theme is focused to responding to the character and place of Kiama. The planning priorities under this theme are: • PP14 – support and create vibrant places • PP15 – identify and safeguard heritage significance • PP16 – celebrate and protect local character Most relevant planning priority to the Night-time Economy Strategy is to PP14 - *support and create vibrant places.*	• The Night-time Economy Strategy provides for a place-based approach that seeks to enhance evening vibrancy of Kiama, improving the character of Kiama. • It will support to enable other strategies for the locality, where practical, such as the Kiama Town Centre Strategy as noted above, which includes public domain initiatives to enhance the Kiama Town Centre.

Kiama Community Strategic Plan 2025-2035
Prepared by: Kiama Council

The Kiama Community Strategic Plan 2025- 2035 (CSP) provides a long-term and high-level plan to guide the Kiama community.

It outlines the priorities of the area and the ways these will be delivered. It ultimately seeks to prepare Kiama best for the future.

This plan is based on four (4) focus areas that define Council's long-term goals for the Kiama. To implement these, the CSP identifies partnership with other levels of government, as well as businesses and organisations.

The four (4) focus areas of the CSP for Kiama are:

- Liveable
- Sustainable
- Resourceful
- Responsible

Of relevance to the Night-time Economy Strategy is the CSP focus area 'Resourceful'. A goal under this focus area is:

> *'3.2 - An economy that balances tourism opportunities with resident needs and ensuring we (Kiama) doesn't lose our community feel'*

A corresponding strategy to achieve this goal is:

> *'3.2.3 – support a safe, inclusive and vibrant night-time economy that helps foster youth employment, social engagement and cultural expression'*

The CSP then further notes as a priority/action in 2025 and beyond is:

> *'Work with 24-Hour Economy Commissioner and Office of the Local Government to implement appropriate components of the Government vibrancy reforms'*

- Kiama Council sought and received NSW Government support in year 2025 to develop this Night-time Economy Strategy from the NSW Office for the 24-Hour Economy Commissioner (and an eventual Special Entertainment Precinct).
- The Night-time Economy Strategy supports to further enable the Kiama CSP.
- It provides for a framework for a vibrant night-time economy that is responsive to the character of the locality.
- It responds to enhance amenity for the local community, as well the visitor economy. Therefore, provides a balanced approach.
- It aligns to the NSW Government's vibrancy reforms for encouraging after dark activity across the State.

Creative Kiama Cultural Plan 2025-2029 *Prepared by: Kiama Council*	
The Creative Kiama Cultural Plan (Cultural Plan) seeks to maintain, and nurture, the arts and cultural heritage of Kiama. It is based on a framework to leverage the art and culture, to achieve diverse outcomes throughout the local area. The strategic framework includes four (4) pillars, with strategies and actions within. These are: 1. First Nations first; 2. Creative learning and participation; 3. Opportunities and partnerships; 4. Creative infrastructure. Pillar 2 and Pillar 4 are considered relevant to the Night-time Economy Strategy.	See below.
Pillar 2 Creative learning and participation This seeks to *'provide greater access to creative learning, professional development for artists and support for small creative industries'.* Under Pillar 2, the relevant strategy and actions are: *'Strategy: Support a vibrant night-time economy* *Actions:* • *Explore partnerships with local businesses to host after-hours events, such as micro-music festivals and offer new opportunity for artists.* • *Develop strategies to foster a night-time economy to particularly support the local music scene'*	• The Night-time Economy Strategy seeks to foster the appropriate growth of the after dark economy in Kiama. • The strategy also identifies the potential of a SEP. • A SEP, once implemented, would also support to foster the local music scene, including by initiatives offered to licensed premises to hold live music or other live performances.
Pillar 4 Creative infrastructure This seeks to *'expand spaces and venues for exhibitions, performances, artistic participation, ensuring more opportunities for engagement in arts and culture'.* Under Pillar 4, the relevant strategy and actions are: *'Strategy: Promote a thriving night economy*	• The Night-time Economy Strategy provides a strategy for a more vibrant economy. • Achieving vibrancy may include a range of appropriate activities to achieve. For example, evening performances, late night cultural events and creative markets, later

Actions: • *Advocate for more evening performances, late night cultural events, and creative markets. Seek inspiration funding from Live Music Office/Live and Local.* • *Scope the development of a permanent outdoor projection gallery'*	trading of venues and other pending implementation • As noted above, it also outlines for a future SEP with these providing incentives live music or other live performance.

Kiama Local Housing Strategy (2025)
Prepared by: Kiama Council

The Local Housing Strategy (LHS) guides the housing growth of Kiama to year 2031. The LHS provides a framework for the right location of the housing and especially around infrastructure or in existing suitably zoned locations.

The LHS also aligns to the National Housing Accord which sets a target for additional homes (1.2 million dwellings) over the next five years, measured from year 2024.

The LHS acknowledges the benefits of housing growth, especially where it is appropriately located. Communities can experience better quality of life, by being co-located with social and physical infrastructure.

The vision for the future Kiama LGA is to therefore have well planned communities, with houses in the right locations, together with services and infrastructure.

To support the vision, LHS has four (4) priorities. These are outlined as follows:

1. Priority 1 – sufficient and well-located housing supply
2. Priority 2 – diversity of housing options
3. Priority 3 – infrastructure is provided to support population growth
4. Priority 4 – the centres and villages thrive

Needs are also identified by the LHS. Of relevance are:

- ….
- *Increase density in our centres for smaller homes, flats and apartments*
- *Housing that enhances local centres with services*
- ….

Infill development is encouraged by the LHS (supported by some appropriate greenfield development in certain locations). This aligns with the Illawarra-Shoalhaven Regional Plan that supports largely infill housing development in Kiama (and Gerringong) to reduce urban sprawl.

The Kiama LHS identifies that there is capability to provide for greater housing densities in existing centres. (It notes that Kiama Town Centre has planned for infill housing opportunities through LEP amendments).

An opportunity of the plan is to:

- *Encourage <u>new housing growth within existing centres</u> and facilities to make use of existing infrastructure*

- The Night-time Economy Strategy works with the vision and priorities of the Kiama LHS.
- The strategy identifies for a future SEP.
- The town centre includes land that is zoned under the Kiama LEP 2011 for residential accommodation such as mixed-use development, shop top housing and seniors living, and which is identified for housing growth.
- A future SEP in the Town Centre would provide for a framework to deliver enhanced after dark vibrancy, whilst providing amenity for sensitive receivers within and around. (Sensitive receivers also include tourist and visitor facilities, places of public worship, health service facilities and childcare).
- Accordingly, the Night-time Economy Strategy is not inconsistent with the LHS to be able to support continued appropriate housing growth and the broader this provides for the local community and the region.

Kiama Visitor Economy Strategy 2035 (Draft)
Prepared by: Kiama Council

The draft Visitor Economy Strategy (VES) provides a framework to manage visitor growth and protect place whilst delivery benefits for residents, businesses and visitors. It sets the vision and strategic goals and provides five (5) focus areas to guide investment.

The vision provided by the VES is:

'By 2035, Kiama will inspire visitors with authentic coastal experiences that commit them to nature, heritage and community. It will be a sustainable, culturally rich and community supported destination where visitors stay longer, do more and contribute to a thriving local economy, vibrant culture and protected environment'

With respect to the strategic goal to support the vision, goal number 5 is relevant:

5. Activate the night-time economy and cultural economy'

With respect to focus area, focus area number 5 is relevant:

5. Night-time and cultural economy – support cultural programming, night-time economy strategy and promote evening experiences'

The strategic goal and focus area are responsive to an identified opportunity for the visitor economy, which the strategy notes under 2.5 Opportunities

'Night-Time Economy

Evening activity is limited outside peak dining hours, creating a gap for overnight visitors and locals seeking cultural engagement after dark. Development of a Night-Time Economy Strategy, aligned with NSW Government Vibrancy Reforms, could prioritise:

- *Precinct Activation: Special Entertainment Precincts and coordinated late-night*
- *programming in Kiama CBD and Gerringong, supported by lighting, wayfinding and safety measures.*
- *Cultural Programming: Partnerships with regional organisations and local creatives to deliver small-scale performances, art trails and pop-up experiences complementing existing events.*
- *Noise Management: Implement noise attenuation measures to protect residential amenity.'*

- The Night-time Economy Strategy responds to the initiatives of the draft Visitor Economy Strategy.
- It seeks to support the visitor economy, by providing for enhanced after dark vibrancy, reducing current 'gaps' in evening activity and therefore supports for visitors to stay longer in Kiama.
- A future Special Entertainment Precinct in the Kiama Town Centre, as also identified by the Night-time Economy Strategy, will also provide for appropriate noise management measures to protect residential amenity whilst supporting vibrancy.

With respect to implementing strategic goal number 5, the strategy outlines relevant objectives and initiatives. Of relevance is:

'5. Activate the Night-time and cultural economy

Objective

Position Kiama as a vibrant coastal destination with a thriving night-time and cultural economy

Initiative

- *Enrich visitor and resident experiences by supporting evening activities, live performance, dining and events; curate precinct activation in the Harbour and town centre.*
- *Develop the Night-Time Economy Strategy and progress the Special Entertainment Precinct trial to concentrate nightlife where residential impacts are manageable.*
- *Improve lighting, safety and transport arrangements that support movement after dark; balance activation with amenity through noise and place management.*
- *Integrate night-time itineraries and cultural storytelling into destination campaigns.'*

Kiama Regional Economic Development Strategy (2023)
Prepared by: the NSW Department of Regional NSW

The Regional Economic Development Strategy (REDS) guides policy and investment decisions to enhance the resilience of Kiama and drive sustainable and long-term economic growth.

The strategy identifies the significance of the tourism/visitor economy in Kiama, providing some 1,679 jobs in the region and a spend of $223 Million (year 2021).

The tourism/visitor economy is identified as the key industry of Kiama (as also identified by the Illawarra Shoalhaven Regional Plan).

Consultation from preparing the REDS identified a priority for Kiama to refresh the Kiama Town Centre and expand visitor economy opportunities. This is to support maximising the value the visitor economy may provide to Kiama.

The strategies of the REDS are:

1. *Drive tourism growth beyond its current seasonal peak and develop opportunities that will grow overnight visitor expenditure.*
2. *Enhance liveability of Kiama and capitalise on the region's unique opportunities to drive economic development.*
3. *Support growth in key industries and encourage twenty-first century industry and business models through well planned urban and regional land development.*

It is noted that the endorsed *Kiama Strategic Tourism and Events Plan 2022 - 2026* (prepared by Kiama Council) includes a similar goal to grow overnight visitor expenditure.

Enablers are provided by the REDS to deliver strategies. Of relevance:

Strategy	Enabler
Drive tourism growth beyond its current seasonal peak and develop opportunities that will grow overnight visitor expenditure.	*Identify opportunities to grow attractions and agritourism experiences across the region*
Enhance liveability of Kiama and capitalise on the region's unique opportunities to drive economic development.	*Plan for the revitalisation of Kiama Town Centre, including exploring opportunities for a heritage precinct, to identify opportunities to improve amenity through civic space and community assets.*

- The Night-time Economy Strategy provides for an after dark vibrancy initiative, supporting to reduce a current evening activity gap, and therefore enhancements to the amenity provided to visitors.
- It supports for growing overnight visitor expenditure and tourism growth.
- The Night-time Economy Strategy also supports to enhance the liveability of Kiama. Supporting after dark vibrancy provides benefits to residents and the broader community, including potential enhanced access to jobs and local amenity benefits.

Kiama Draft Employment Lands Strategy (Draft Version 2 2026) *Prepared by: Kiama Municipal Council*	
The Draft Employment Lands Strategy establishes a comprehensive planning framework to direct the management and development of employment lands within the Kiama Local Government Area (LGA) for the next two decades. Employment lands refer to areas that permit activities that generate employment. For Kiama, these are lands zoned in the Local Environmental Plan E1 Local Centre and E3 Productivity Support, E4 General Industrial and W4 Working Waterfront. Land zoned E1 Local Centre permits for commercial uses - such as offices, retail (including shops, food and drink premises, entertainment) and business premises. Lands zoned for industrial provides for industrial activities, industrial retail outlets and industry (including both light and heavy industry). The Draft Employment Lands Strategy has been formally exhibited and presented to Council and is in process towards finalisation.	• The Night-time Economy Strategy provides a framework for enhanced activity in appropriate locations. This includes retail, as well as other commercially related activities. • This strategy therefore supports the employment lands of Kiama, providing benefits to the community, including jobs and retail amenity.
Kiama Town Centre Study (2019) *Prepared by: Studio GL*	
This study focused on the Kiama Town Centre as a whole, and developed a vision for the future desired character of the town. A spatial framework was developed that, with the associated initiatives, would support the realisation of this vision. The vision for the town centre was as follows: *'The Kiama Town Centre has an attractive relaxed seaside town character with connected open spaces that celebrates the scenic qualities of the location and promotes the history of the place and its people.* *The centre is a comfortable and attractive place to access and walk around with reduced traffic congestion. It provides a mix of retail and services for locals and visitors, day to day, in the evenings and on weekends during every season of the year.'*	• The Night-time Economy Strategy leverages key elements of fine grain public domain improvement recommendations made through this strategy as well as specific recommendations around the harbourfront in the Kiama Town Centre specifically, noting this study is not LGA wide. • The suggestion around the surf club has also been adopted, albeit at an LGA wide level regarding members clubs.

In relation to the Nighttime Economy Strategy, the following are aspects of the Kiama Town Centre Study that are relevant. A key driver, identified by the community, was: *A more diverse and vibrant night-time economy with cultural and entertainment facilities and restaurants and bars is seen as desirable.*

This resulted in the following guiding design principles:

- Encourage evening / night-time venues, i.e. shopping, library, galleries, theatre.
- Provide facilities for night-time uses such as restaurants, craft breweries and bars.

The following initiatives were identified:

- **PS03 Night-time atmosphere**
  It is recognised that a pleasant night-time atmosphere increases the actual (and perceived) feeling of safety and security. The provision of appropriate lighting, with a focus on uplighting of trees, heritage buildings and public art, would be an effective way to create a pleasant atmosphere, whilst also highlighting the centre's assets after dark.
- **BC02 Night-time economy**
  A diverse, attractive night-time economy contributes to the viability of a town centre and encourages residential uses and tourism. In order to attract people to the centre, and encourage them to linger, a safe environment and a range of evening activities and venues is needed, such as cinemas, performance spaces, cultural venues, small bars and restaurants. Encouraging extended opening hours for the library, evening classes in public buildings and night-time events such as live music performances on the main street would increase activity and encourage local businesses and restaurants to open into the evenings.

Some initiatives were spatial, and the centre was divided into three distinct precincts: Harbourside Precinct, Westend Precinct and Surf Beach Precinct.

In the Harbourside Precinct, the following initiatives were proposed:

- **H08 Food destination Fish Markets**
  Expansion and upgrading of the existing Kiama Fish Market facility to provide a food destination within easy walking distance of the centre and Blowhole Point. This initiative proposed exploring opportunities for additional food and beverage offerings and increased indoor/outdoor dining.
- **H15 Library Connection**
  Kiama Library is a popular destination, and this initiative considered ways to better connect the library by formalising and upgrading the pedestrian link between Railway Parade and Shoalhaven Street. Combined with increased opening hours, this improved connectivity would activate this part of the centre and utilise a well loved community asset.

In the Surf Beach Precinct, the following initiatives were proposed:

- **S08 Surf Club activation**
  This initiative sought to leverage the existing surf club as an opportunity for an improved food, drink and entertainment venue. Utilising its beach side location, it was considered to be an ideal location for a new restaurant, with event and function capability. Increased parking was one constraints, but this was considered manageable through an extension to the adjacent carpark, which would also serve events and markets at Coronation (Surf Beach) Park.

Many of the other initiatives focused on improved access and movement across the centre and on improved built form outcomes that were sympathetic and in keeping with the town's seaside character. These would all support an improved night-time economy.

Authorisation and version control

Owner/Responsible Officer	Manager Tourism and Economic Development
Department	Strategies and Communities Strategies and Communities
Date adopted/endorsed	[date]
Resolution number (if applicable)	[number]
Next review date	[date]
TRIM reference	[trim ref]

Date reviewed	Date adopted/endorsed	Brief detail of amendments
[date]	[date]	[insert detail here]
[date]	[date]	[insert detail here]
[date]	[date]	[insert detail here]

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

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.

How to contact council

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KIAMA MUNICIPAL COUNCIL
your council, your community

Respect
Innovation
Integrity
Teamwork
Excellence

Kiama Night-Time Strategy: Background Report

26 May 2026

Prepared by

Geografia

Prepared for

RE ACTIVATE

KIAMA MUNICIPAL COUNCIL

Geografia

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The front cover image features Little Betty's in Kiama, sourced from Destination Kiama.

Executive Summary

OVERVIEW

- Kiama's night-time economy is performing well for a regional coastal LGA, accounting for around 13% of total expenditure activity. It is anchored by a robust dining and hospitality offer.
- Activity is highly concentrated in Kiama township and predominantly driven by visitor expenditure. In contrast, a significant share of resident expenditure occurs outside the LGA, indicating leakage to surrounding centres. The visitor mix includes socially active and higher-spending segments, alongside a dominant early night market, highlighting both a strong existing base and untapped potential for broader night-time activity.
- Growth in Kiama's night-time economy is likely to be driven by strengthening the early night (6–9 pm) offer, aligned to family and visitor demand, and recapturing resident spend currently leaving the LGA.

A PLACE-BASED, CENTRE-LED NIGHT-TIME ECONOMY

- Night-time activity is concentrated in Kiama township, which functions as the LGA's principal night-time destination. This reflects both the scale of the LGA and township's role within the broader activity centre network.
- Using an activity centre framework, a clear hierarchy approach should guide growth:
    - Kiama township: the primary hub for dining, entertainment, and visitor activity, with Special Entertainment Precinct (SEP) prioritisation directed to this area given the concentration of existing night-time activity (Figure A).
    - Gerringong and Kiama Downs: secondary centres supporting both local and visitor demand.
    - Smaller towns: providing distinct, place-based night-time experiences that complement the core centre.
- This approach enables broader activity across the LGA while maintaining the strength, scale, and viability of the primary centre.

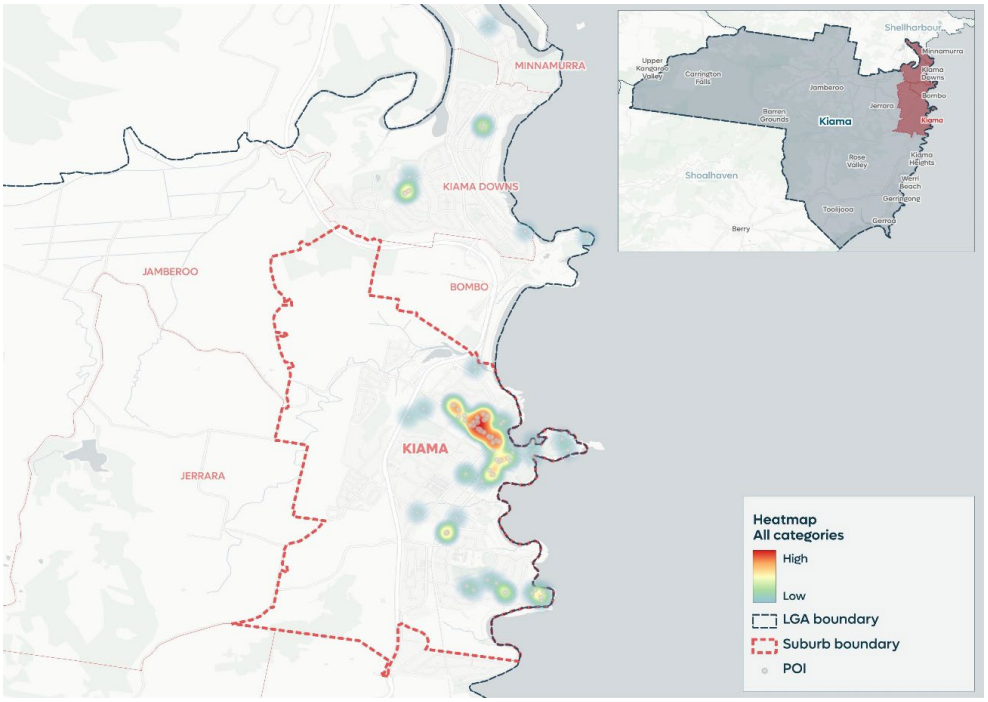

Figure A: Distribution of Night-Time Activity across Kiama LGA
Source: Google Places API, 2026, compiled by Geografia, 2026

GROWING THE EARLY NIGHT ECONOMY AND RECAPTURING LOCAL DEMAND

- Dining and hospitality currently underpin the night-time economy. However, resident behaviour indicates a demand for a broader and more diverse offer, with a substantial share of spending currently occurring outside the LGA. Key opportunities include:
    - Recapturing resident spend currently escaping to nearby centres (e.g., Wollongong, Shellharbour), particularly in Dining & Entertainment and leisure categories.
    - Expanding into twilight retail, wellness, and after-work services
    - Leveraging events and programming to extend and diversify activity beyond peak periods.
- Healthcare, education and training, and professional services also contribute to early night activity. Expanding these sectors can provide a more stable, non-seasonal base of demand and support activity outside peak trading periods.

A STRONG EARLY NIGHT ECONOMY WITH YEAR-ROUND OPPORTUNITY

- The early night period (6–9 pm) is the primary window for growth in Kiama's night-time economy. This aligns with the LGA's visitor profile, where young families and socially active cohorts drive demand for early evening activity. Demand for late-night activity is limited, with growth most likely to occur within the early night window. Growth opportunities include:
    - Strengthening participation in twilight and early night activity.
    - Expanding family-friendly and accessible experiences (e.g., festivals, night markets, pop-ups)
    - Supporting longer dwell times through targeted events and programming.
- Summer remains the peak period of activity, with clear opportunities to strengthen the winter and shoulder seasons through targeted programming and a more consistent resident demand base.

A CLEAR PATHWAY FOR GROWTH

- The LGA's night-time economy has a strong foundation. Future growth will be driven by improving offer diversity, strengthening resident demand retention, and supporting activity across locations and time periods. The strategic directions focus on:
    1. Adopting a hierarchy approach to night-time development.
    2. Growing early night-time economy off strengths in young family visitor markets.
    3. Recapturing leaked resident expenditure to build a more balanced, year-round night-time economy.
- Table A translates these directions into targeted actions and measurable outcomes, forming the basis for implementation and future impact assessment of the Kiama Night-Time Strategy.

Key Finding	Recommended Strategic Direction	Success Metrics and KPI (Source in Brackets)
Strong night-time economy (13% of total expenditure activity)	• Build on the strong base by expanding essential and service-based activity, including healthcare, education and training, and professional services that	Night-time value-add share of total economy activity: 38% ↑ (CityCompass)

Key Finding	Recommended Strategic Direction	Success Metrics and KPI (Source in Brackets)
	operate into the early night. This supports a local night-time workforce, providing a more stable, non-visitor-dependent demand base for surrounding hospitality and retail.	Night-time spending share: 13% → 14-15% (Spendmapp) Night-time employment: ↑ (CityCompass) Number of businesses open at 6-9 pm across the Kiama LGA: ↑ (Google Places API)
Highly concentrated activity in Kiama township	• Adopt a clear activity centre hierarchy, reinforcing Kiama township as the primary night-time hub, with Gerringong and Kiama Downs as secondary centres and smaller towns playing a complementary, place-based role. • Focus investment and activation in Kiama township, while enabling tailored, locally relevant offerings in secondary centres.	Kiama township share of total night-time spend: 65% → 55–60% (Spendmapp) Secondary centres share of total night-time spend: 35% → 40–45% (Spendmapp)
Resident profile skewed towards older cohorts	• Strengthen the twilight and early night economy for older residents, including early dining, retail, and low-intensity social activities aligned with local demand. • Prioritise accessibility, safety, lighting and, amenity to support confidence and consistent participation in the early night period.	Early night (6–9 pm) share of total night-time spend: ↑ (Spendmapp) Older cohort (65+) share of total non-work hours spend: ↑ (Spendmapp)
Visitor profile skews toward young couples and families	• Prioritise family-friendly and experience-based offerings, such as night markets, outdoor dining, and small-scale events, aligning with the LGA's early evening-oriented visitor profile. • Ensure public environments are safe, welcoming and accessible to increase participation across key groups, including families, women and (complementing the local) older resident profile, reinforcing the LGA's positioning as a relaxed coastal destination.	Social Energisers share of daytrip visitation: 24% → 24–28% (Geografia, TRA) High-Yield Social Consumers of overnight share: 19% → 19–22% (Geografia, TRA) Conservative Daytime Consumers

Key Finding	Recommended Strategic Direction	Success Metrics and KPI (Source in Brackets)
		of daytrip and overnight visitation shares: 36–37% → 34–36% (Geografia, TRA) 18-34 female share of total non-work hours spend: ↑ (Spendmapp)
High dependence on summer periods	• Develop a targeted off-peak events and programming strategy, including winter festivals and shoulder-season activations, to smooth seasonal demand and support more consistent year-round activity.	Share of total night-time spend outside Dec–Jan: ↑ (Spendmapp)
High reliance on Dining & Entertainment spend	• Diversify the night-time offer beyond dining by supporting twilight and early night retail, extended trading hours, and complementary uses such as night markets and small-format pop-up retail. • Encourage growth in after-work services (e.g. gyms, personal services) to strengthen early night activity and extend dwell time. This includes tapping into the emerging night-time health and wellness market, such as evening yoga classes, wellness studios, and experiential offerings (e.g., night spa and bathing), particularly in leisure and non-centre locations. • Develop targeted events and programming to extend activity beyond dining, including small-scale festivals, live music, and seasonal events. This can increase length of stay, attract new audiences, and provide reasons to visit beyond peak dining periods.	Dining & Entertainment share of total night-time spend: 62% → 50–55% (Spendmapp) All Other Categories share of total night-time spend: 38% → 45–50% (Spendmapp)
High visitor spend share	• Continue to support visitor-driven growth while strengthening the resident market to stabilise demand year-round. This includes improving the consistency and accessibility of local offerings to reduce reliance on seasonal peaks. • Encourage greater local utilisation in smaller townships and secondary centres, where activity is currently more reliant on visitors. Strengthening everyday offerings and accessibility can help build a more consistent local customer base alongside visitor demand.	Visitor share of total night-time: 60% → 50–55% (Spendmapp) Resident share of total night-time spend: 40% → 45–50% (Spendmapp)

Key Finding	Recommended Strategic Direction	Success Metrics and KPI (Source in Brackets)
High levels of Resident Escape Spend	• Prioritise recapturing resident spend in key leakage categories, particularly Dining & Entertainment and broader leisure experiences, where a significant share of expenditure currently occurs outside the LGA. • Investigate the drivers of resident leakage to travel to nearby regional centres (e.g., Wollongong, Shellharbour) and respond by improving variety, quality, and setting of local offerings to better compete for discretionary spend.	Resident Escape Spend share of total non-work hours spend: 70% → 55–60% (Spendmapp) Resident Local Spend share of total non-work hours spend: 30% → 40–45% (Spendmapp)

Table A: Strategic Directions and Success Metrics for the Kiama Night-Time Strategy
Source: Geografia, 2026

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1.0 Introduction

1.1 BACKGROUND

The Kiama Night-Time Background Report has been prepared to support the development of the Kiama Night-Time Economy Strategy and the establishment of a Special Entertainment Precinct (SEP). These initiatives are part of a broader State and local government policy focus on strengthening night-time vibrancy, supporting business resilience, and improving visitor experiences.

This Background Report provides an evidence-based foundation for these initiatives for the Kiama Council. It examines current night-time activity, behaviour patterns, and economic contributions, identifying opportunities and trends that can inform future planning, investment, and strategic decision-making

1.2 STUDY APPROACH

The analysis draws primarily on Geografia's Spendmapp database, which provides detailed insights into consumer expenditure, resident and visitor behaviour, and time-of-day spending patterns. This is complemented by proprietary CityCompass modelling and data from Google Places API to map and verify business locations, types, and trading patterns. Together, these sources provide a comprehensive picture of Kiama's night-time economy.

The study focuses on the Kiama Local Government Area (LGA) and five key towns: Kiama (referred to as Kiama township), Kiama Downs, Gerringong, Gerroa, and Jamberoo (Figure 1). These towns were selected due to their economic size (as measured through Spendmapp).

The analysis examines when, where, and how night-time activity occurs, the key drivers of spending, and trends that may influence planning and investment decisions. This approach ensures that the findings are directly relevant to shaping the Kiama Night-Time Economy Strategy, supporting a night-time economy that benefits residents, businesses, and visitors.

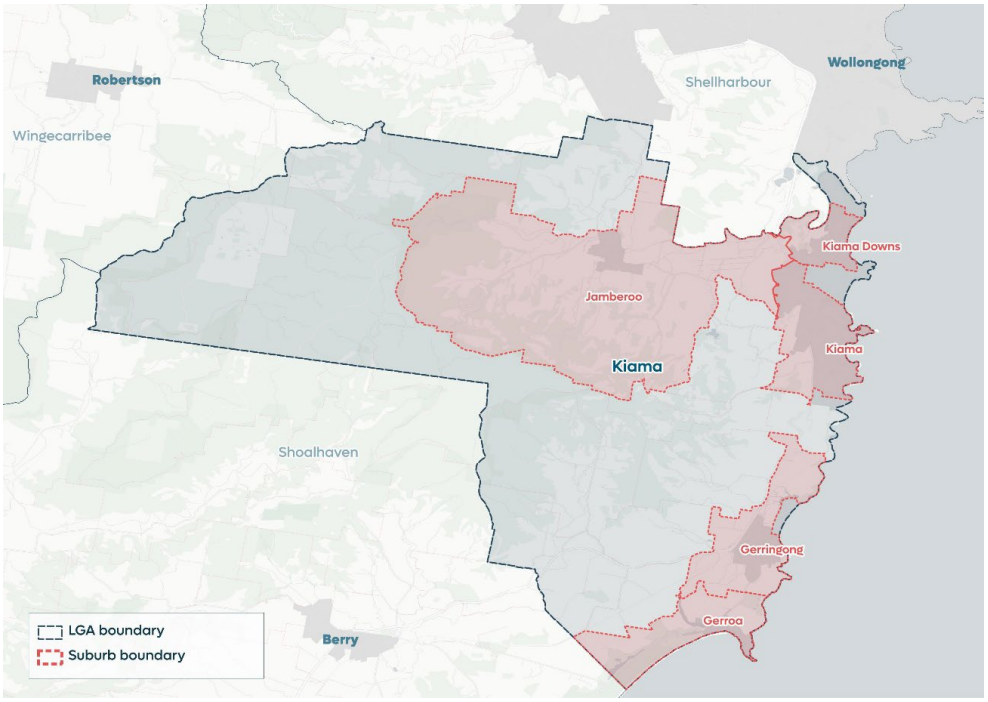

Figure 1: Study Area
Source: Geografia, 2026

1.3 GLOSSARY OF TERMS

The key terms used in this report are defined below.

Term	Description
Night-time	The period between **6 pm and 6 am** used to define when nighttime activity occurs.
Early evening (twilight)	Typically from **5 pm to 8:30 pm**, based on commonly used definitions of twilight trading hours and early evening activity patterns.
Early night	The period between **6pm and 9 pm**.
Late night	The period between **9 pm and 12 am**.
Output	The total value of all economic activity, including all sales and transactions generated by businesses.
Value-add	The net value created by economic activity is calculated as output minus the cost of inputs.
Gross Regional Product	The total value of goods and services produced in the region is equivalent to total value-added and is a key measure of overall economic performance.

Term	Description
Non-work hours	A key time period used in Spendmapp, covering **6 pm–8 am on weekdays and all hours on weekends and public holidays**, capturing when people are generally not working.
Resident Local Spend	One of the main expenditure types used in Spendmapp. It refers to spending by residents within the study area (municipality or town) that contributes directly to the local economy.
Resident Escape Spend	One of the main expenditure types used in Spendmapp. It refers to spending by residents outside the study area municipality, representing leakage (i.e., money leaving the local economy).
Visitor Local Spend	One of the main expenditure types used in Spendmapp. It refers to spending by non-residents within the study area (municipality or town) that contributes directly to the local economy.
Dining & Entertainment	One of the main expenditure categories used in Spendmapp. It includes spending on dining (e.g., restaurants, fast food), bars and clubs, and entertainment (e.g., cinemas, theatres, bowling), grouping relevant merchant categories to represent social and leisure activity.

Table 1: Glossary of Terms
Source: Geografia, 2026

1.4 DATA SOURCES

CityCompass

CityCompass is a locally calibrated economic modelling platform that estimates output, value-add, employment, and Gross Regional Product at a local government level. The model is based on an input–output framework, adapted using regional data and location quotient techniques to reflect the structure of the local economy.

Spendmapp

Spendmapp is a bank transaction analytics tool used by local and regional governments across Australia to track and understand local consumer spending. It draws on anonymised bank transaction data, allowing analysis of spending patterns by location, time, expenditure type, and expenditure category.

Spendmapp distinguishes between resident and visitor spending and can show whether money is spent locally or escapes to other areas. It also allows analysis by time of day, including night-time and non-work hours, and by expenditure categories such as Dining & Entertainment. In this study, Spendmapp data is used to measure the size, growth, and composition of the night-time economy in the study area, providing the evidence base for understanding economic drivers, escape spend, and potential opportunities to strengthen the night-time economy.

Google Places API

Business data for this study are sourced from Google Places API, which underpins Google Maps and search. The dataset includes business names, categories, addresses, geographic coordinates, user ratings, and opening hours (where available). Google collects this information from a mix of sources, including business owners (via Google Business Profiles), third-party providers, web indexing, and user contributions, such as reviews, edits, and photos.

While generally reliable for understanding where and what types of businesses operate, the dataset is not complete. It only captures businesses with a visible digital presence, and some details, such as opening hours, depend on owner or user input. In this study, the data are used to map business locations, classify activity types, and support analysis of night-time activity in the study area, focusing on activity occurring between 6 pm and 4 am, when night-time activity is most relevant.

Tourism Research Australia

Tourism Research Australia (TRA) provides official national and regional data on domestic and international tourism activity, including visitor numbers, purpose of visit, and length of stay. The datasets draw on a combination of visitor surveys and administrative data sources to capture tourism behaviour and trends over time. In this study, TRA data is used to contextualise visitor demand within the study area, particularly daytrip and overnight visitation patterns, alongside Helix Personas.

2.0 Economic Analysis of the Night-Time Economy

The night-time economy is a significant component of the local economy

Night-time activity (6 pm-6 am) in the Kiama LGA is estimated to account for 35-38% of total economic activity across key measures, including output, value-add, and Gross Regional Product (Table 2). While most economic activity still occurs during daytime hours, this shows that the night-time economy plays a substantial role in supporting the broader local economy.

Metric	Total Economic Activity (24 Hours) ($M)	Night-Time ($M)	Share of Total Economic Activity
Output ($M)	2,194	758	**35%**
Value-Add ($M)	742	280	**38%**
Gross Regional Product ($M)	1,369	521	**38%**

Table 2: Night-Time Economy Contribution to Total Economic Activity, 2025
Source: CityCompass by Geografia, 2026

Hospitality is the core driver of night-time activity and employment

Accommodation and Food Services is the largest contributor to night-time value-add ($74 M, or 26% of total night-time value-add) and the largest employer (1,118 jobs out of 2,615 total night-time jobs), making it the primary driver of visible night-time activity (Table 3).

The sector underpins dining, social activity, and visitor experiences and has the highest reliance on night-time trading among industries. It also accounts for a large share of entry-level and flexible jobs, supporting economic activity and accessible employment opportunities.

Industry	Night-Time Value-Add ($M)	Share of Total Night-Time Value-Add (%)	Night-Time Jobs
Accommodation and Food Services	74	**26%**	1,118
Health Care and Social Assistance	41	**14%**	173

Professional, Scientific and Technical Services	39	**13%**	354
Education and Training	31	**11%**	171
Administrative and Support Services	23	**8%**	68
Construction	20	**7%**	188
Arts and Recreation Services	16	**6%**	156
Retail Trade	13	**5%**	70
Other Services	5	**2%**	13
Tourism	5	**2%**	13

Table 3: Top Industry Contributors to the Night-Time Economy, 2021
Source: CityCompass by Geografia, 2026. Night-time jobs are estimated for 2021 using ABS Place of Employment 2021 Census data and ABS 2021 Time Use Survey

Essential services form a stable night-time base

A substantial share of night-time employment comes from essential services, including Professional, Scientific and Technical Services ($39 M; 354 jobs), Health Care and Social Assistance ($41 M; 173 jobs), alongside Education and Training ($31 M; 171 jobs), and Public Administration and Safety ($4 M; 24 jobs) (Table 4).

In the LGA, this activity is concentrated in aged care, in-home support services, education and training, and small-scale professional work extending beyond standard hours. Public services, including policing and emergency response, also contribute to a continuous presence.

Together, these sectors provide a steady, service-based layer of night-time activity, largely driven by local demand rather than visitors.

Industry	Night-Time Value-Add ($M)	Share of Total Night-Time Value-Add (%)	Night-Time Jobs
Professional, Scientific and Technical Services	39	13%	**354**
Health Care and Social Assistance	41	14%	**173**
Education and Training	31	11%	**171**
Public Administration and Safety	4	1%	**24**

Table 4: Key Essential Services Contributing to the Night-Time Economy, 2025
Source: CityCompass by Geografia, 2026

Night-time retail activity is concentrated in essential and convenience-based uses

Retail and service sectors play a supporting role in night-time employment. Arts and Recreation Services ($16 M; 156 jobs) and Retail Trade ($13 M; 70 jobs) contribute to night-time activity (Table 5), although at a smaller scale than hospitality and essential services uses (Tables 3 and 4).

The relatively high level of employment within Arts and Recreation Services likely reflects the role of clubs, pubs, gyms, recreation facilities, and other leisure-based activities that continue operating into the night.

There is limited discretionary retail trading beyond 6 pm, with only a small number of essential anchors, such as supermarkets, fuel stations, and bottle shops, remaining open later (see Figure 21, which identifies night-time shopping destinations, primarily comprising supermarkets and local grocers) As a result, retail primarily serves local convenience needs and supports adjacent hospitality activity, rather than driving night-time activity.

Industry	Night-Time Value-Add ($M)	Share of Total Night-Time Value-Add (%)	Night-Time Jobs
Arts and Recreation Services	16	6%	**156**
Retail Trade	13	5%	**70**
Administrative and Support Services	23	8%	**68**
Other Services	5	2%	**13**

Table 5: Key Discretionary Services Contributing to Night-Time Economy, 2025
Source: CityCompass by Geografia, 2026

WHAT THIS MEANS FOR THE NIGHT-TIME STRATEGY

- The Strategy should take a targeted approach, focusing on sectors and locations where night-time activity is already established or has clear potential, while supporting a modest, locally oriented night-time offer in smaller centres to meet every day needs and encourage consistent activity across the LGA.
- Strengthening the night-time economy will rely on supporting hospitality, dining, and entertainment. This includes enabling extended trading, improving amenity, and fostering complementary uses that encourage people to stay longer, while also recognising the sector's role in providing flexible and accessible employment.
- The Strategy should consider extending beyond traditional nightlife to support night-time workers, including safe transport, lighting, and after-hours access to

services. There is also an emerging opportunity to cluster evening healthcare (e.g., psychology, allied health, as well as wellness services such as Pilates or yoga), education and training (e.g., skills training), and professional services (e.g., co-working spaces, accounting or legal services with extended hours) within key precincts. This can help build a local workforce base that supports earlier night-time trading.

- There is an opportunity to strengthen complementary night-time uses, such as convenience retail, services, and small-format (e.g., pop-up retail) offerings in key hospitality precincts, helping to extend dwell time and support a more continuous night-time economy.

3.0 Understanding Night-Time Activity

3.1 SCALE, GROWTH AND EMERGING DESTINATIONS

Kiama township anchors the municipality's night-time economy

In 2025, the Kiama LGA's night-time economy generated $46.94 M, with the majority concentrated in Kiama township ($30.39 M, 65% of total night-time spend) (Figure 2 and Figure 3). Gerringong followed with $8.57 M (18%), while Kiama Downs ($2.28 M, 5%), Jamberoo ($1,89 M, 4%), and Gerroa ($1.93 M, 4%) accounted for smaller shares.

The LGA's population is large enough to support a single primary night-time activity centre at the municipal level. Kiama township performs this role, concentrating higher-order dining, entertainment, and visitor activity, while surrounding towns function as local centres, providing smaller-scale, locally oriented night-time uses such as pubs and convenience-based uses.

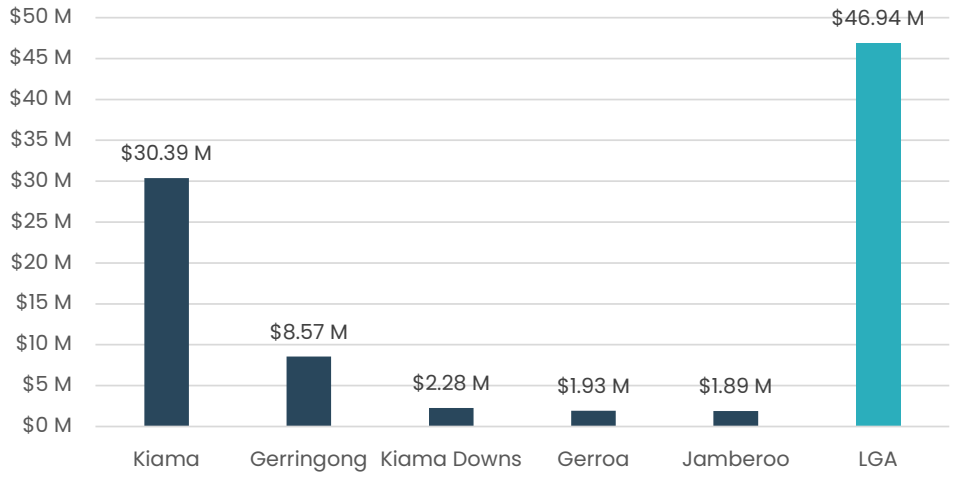

Figure 2: Total Night-Time Spend by Study Area, 2025
Source: Spendmapp by Geografia, 2026

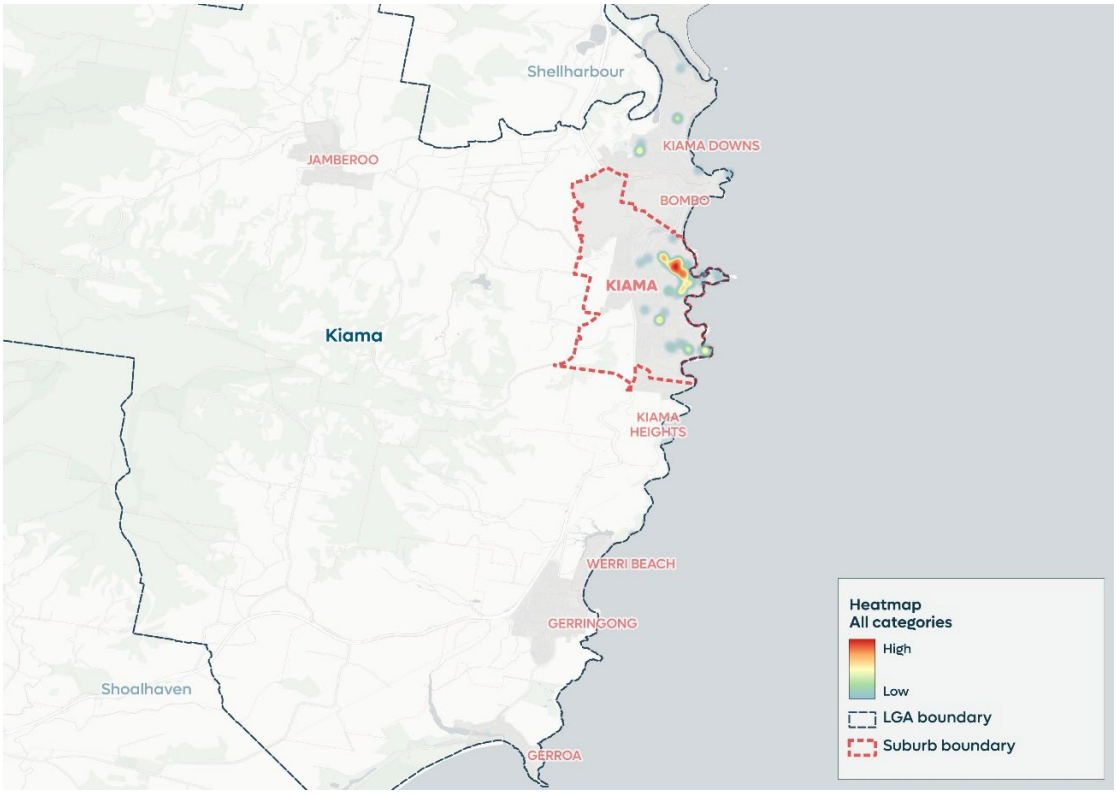

Figure 3: Heatmap of Night Time Activity: Distribution of Businesses and Points of Interests across Kiama LGA
This map shows that activity is primarily concentrated in Kiama township.
Source: Google Places API, 2026, compiled by Geografia, 2026. Further information and analyses on this dataset and its use in this report is provided in Section 3.7.

Smaller towns are emerging as faster-growing night-time destinations

Since 2019, night-time (6 pm-6 am) spending across the LGA has grown at an average annual growth rate (AAGR) of 8%, rising from $29.14 M in 2019 to $46.94 M in 2025 (Figure 4). While Kiama township remains dominant by size ($30.39 M, 8% AAGR), some smaller towns are growing faster from a smaller base: Jamberoo leads with 44% AAGR, followed by Gerroa (10%), Kiama Downs (7%), and Gerringong (6%).

This growth is primarily driven by visitors (as outlined in Section 0). For example, Jamberoo attracts visitors through its natural and recreational assets, including the national park and adventure parks, which in turn may generate demand for early or late-night hospitality. Resident-driven activity (as outlined in Section 0) is more locally anchored, with venues such as Jamberoo Pub, Club Jamberoo, and the Gerringong Bowling & Recreation Club acting as key social hubs.

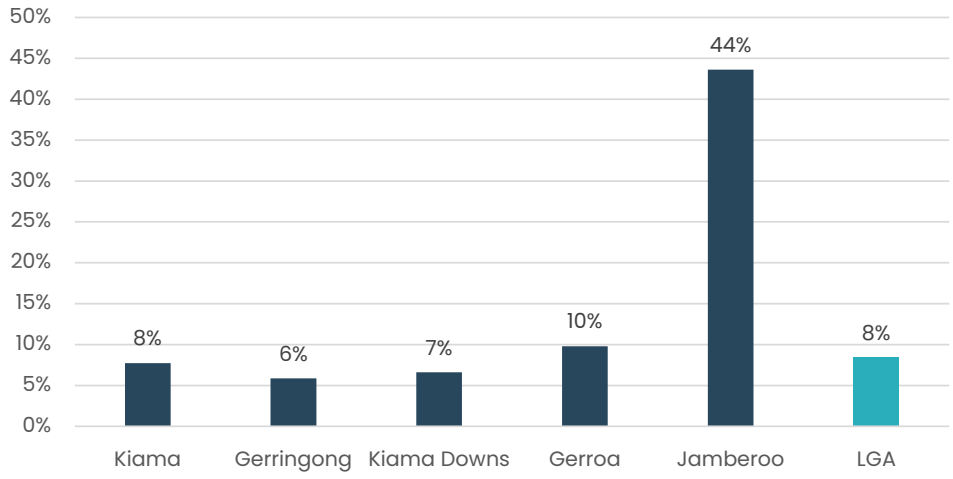

Figure 4: Average Annual Growth Rate of Night-Time Spend by Area, 2019-2025
Source: Spendmapp by Geografia, 2026

WHAT THIS MEANS FOR THE NIGHT-TIME STRATEGY

- Investment should reinforce Kiama township as the municipality's primary night-time hub, consistent with the principles of the activity centre hierarchy. Surrounding towns should be supported to play a complementary local role, meeting resident needs without diluting the scale and viability of the main centre.
- Targeted, proportionate initiatives in smaller towns should focus on distinct, place-based offerings (e.g., coastal, village, nature-based, activity-based) rather than replicating Kiama township's role. These should complement, rather than compete with, Kiama township as the primary night-time destination, supporting both resident and visitor choice while maintaining a clear activity centre hierarchy.

3.2 DRIVERS OF THE NIGHT-TIME ECONOMY

Visitors are the main driver of night-time activity

Across the LGA, night-time activity is strongly supported by visitors rather than residents. In 2025, visitor spending accounted for 60% of total night-time (6 pm-6 am) spend and dominates in all five study area towns (57%-96%), except for Kiama Downs, where residents contribute 82% of spend (Figure 5). Visitor influence is particularly pronounced in Gerroa, and Jamberoo, where over three-quarters of night-time expenditure originates from non-residents.

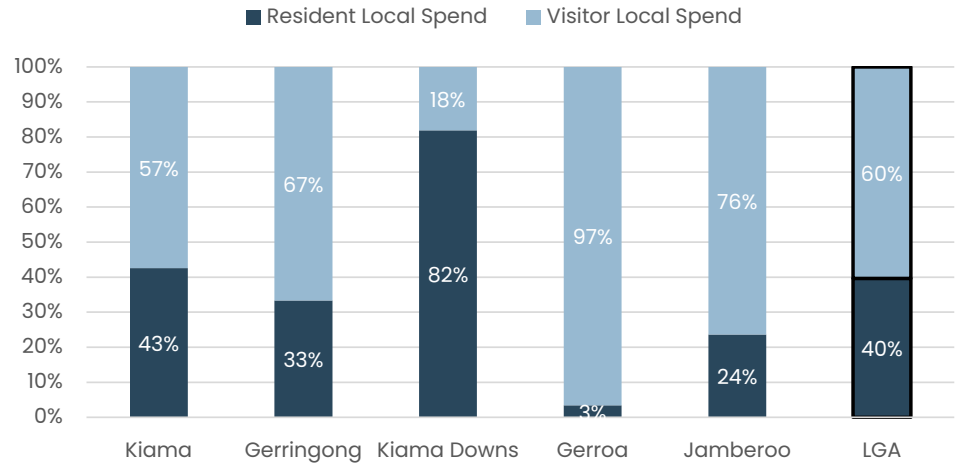

Figure 5: Share of Resident and Visitor Night-Time Spend by Area, 2025
Source: Spendmapp by Geografia, 2026

Visitor spend is centred on Dining & Entertainment

Visitor spending is the LGA's night-time economy is heavily concentrated in Dining & Entertainment, accounting for 70% of total visitor night-time (6 pm-6 am) spend in 2025 (Figure 6). This is consistent across all five study area towns, with the strongest concentrations in Gerroa and Jamberoo, where almost all visitor spend is directed to these experiences.

This aligns with the economic analysis (Section 2.0), which shows hospitality as the top driver of night-time output and jobs, highlighting its central role in night-time activity. It shows that visitors are coming to the LGA for hospitality and social experiences during the night.

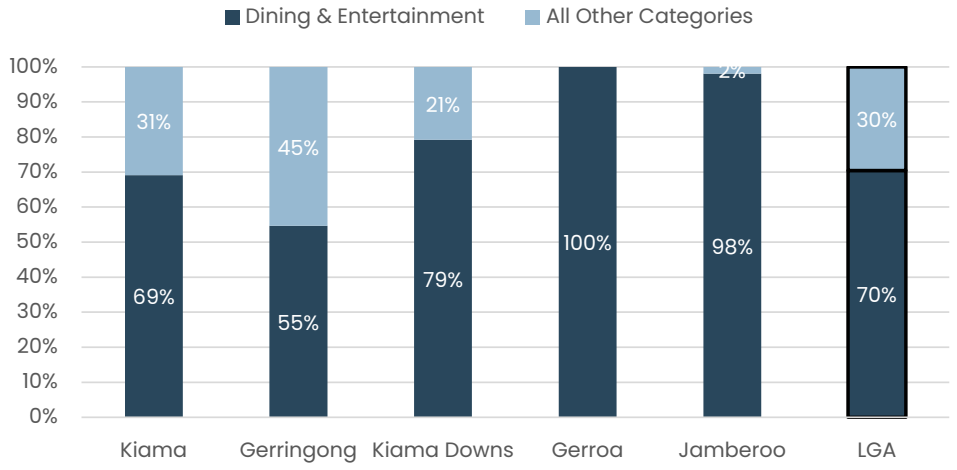

Figure 6: Share of Visitor Night-Time Spend by Category and Study Area, 2025
Source: Spendmapp by Geografia, 2026

Resident spending supports a broader mix of night-time activities

Resident night-time spend is more evenly distributed across categories, with only 49% directed to Dining & Entertainment (Figure 7). In Kiama township, Gerringong, and Kiama Downs, more than half of residents' night-time spend is in All Other Categories[1], such as retail, healthcare, personal services, and more.

[1] Spendmapp categories group spending by type, including Dining & Entertainment, Grocery Stores & Supermarkets, Department Stores & Clothing, Personal Services, Professional Services, and others. 'All Other Categories' includes all of these categories except Dining & Entertainment.

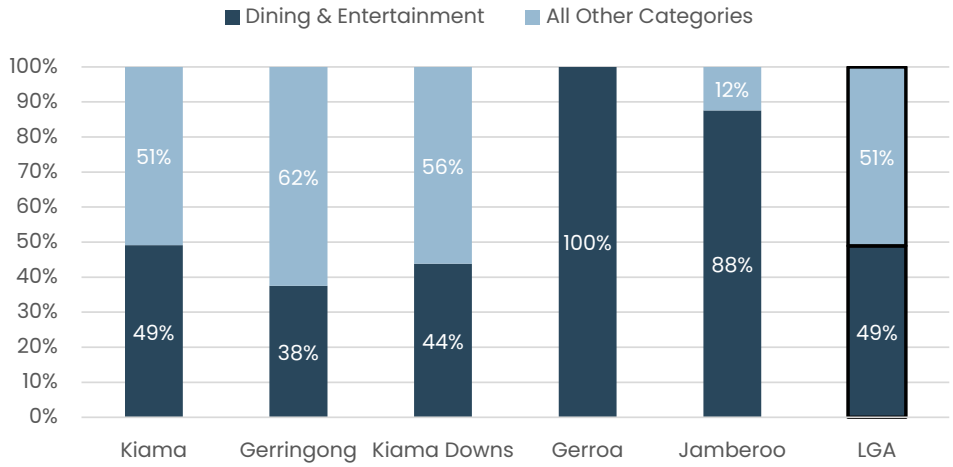

Figure 7: Share of Resident Night-Time Spend by Category and Study Area, 2025
Source: Spendmapp by Geografia, 2026

WHAT THIS MEANS FOR THE NIGHT-TIME STRATEGY

- The Strategy should consider both visitor and resident markets. Initiatives that enhance visitor appeal (e.g., events, expanded dining precincts, seasonal programming) should be complemented by programs that encourage residents to spend locally, ensuring a balanced and resilient night-time economy. Growth should be driven by both visitor spend and retained resident expenditure, with initiatives designed to serve both markets where possible.
- Strengthening and diversifying Dining & Entertainment offerings, including complementary experiences (e.g., curated itineraries linking natural assets and town centres, combined recreation-to-dining journeys), can build on existing demand and position the LGA as a compelling night-time destination for visitors.
- Supporting a diverse mix of uses beyond Dining & Entertainment for residents, particularly in areas with a strong residential base, can strengthen local centres, meet every day needs, and encourage more consistent night-time activity across the LGA. This may include extending trading hours for essential services community facilities (e.g., medical clinics, libraries). Aligning initiatives with stable sectors (e.g., healthcare, education and training, professional services) ensures the night-time economy is both resilient and inclusive of everyday economic activity.

3.3 VISITOR TRENDS AND BEHAVIOURS

Overnight visitation is gaining momentum

Daytrips make up the largest share of trips to the LGA, accounting for 56% (650.9 K trips) in 2024 (Figure 8), compared to 44% (518.2 K trips) for overnight trips. However, this reflects a long-term shift, with daytrip share declining from 63%-76% between 1998 and 2019 (pre-COVID) as overnight visitation has increased in both share and volume. Overnight trips now represent 44% of all visits and have grown at a slightly faster long-term rate (5% AAGR from 1998-2024) compared to daytrips (4%). The average trip length of overnight visitation is 4 nights (Table 6).

This indicates a gradual shift from short visits toward longer stays, providing more opportunities for night-time engagement.

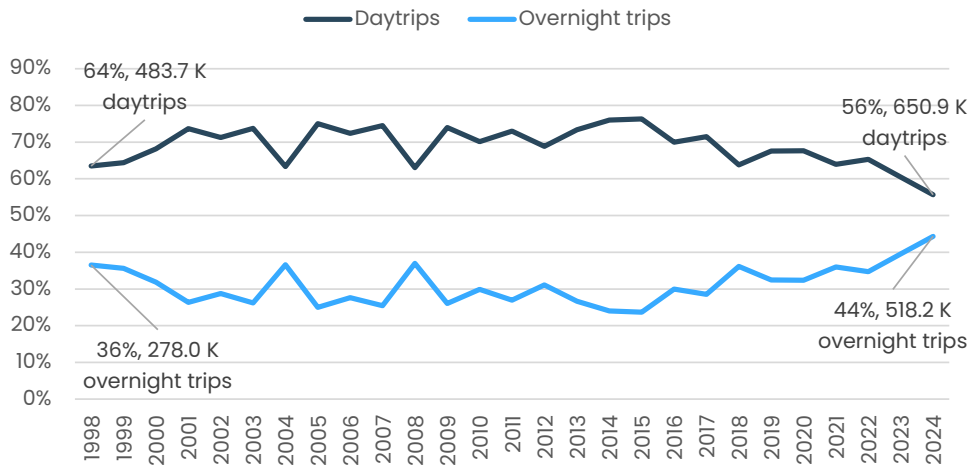

Figure 8: Share of Daytrips and Overnight Trips across the LGA, 1998-2024
Source: TRA, 2026

Duration of Overnight Trips	Overnight Trips (2024)
1 night	65
2 nights	122
3 nights	114
4-7 nights (average 5.5 nights)	152
8-14 nights (average 11 nights)	45

Duration of Overnight Trips	Overnight Trips (2024)
Average trip length (nights)*	4

Table 6: Overnight Trip Duration, 2024
*Average trip length is calculated as total overnight nights divided by total overnight visitors (518). Total overnight nights are estimated using midpoint values for grouped duration categories, where 4-7 nights is assigned 5.5 nights and 8-14 nights is assigned 11 nights.
Source: TRA, 2026

Overnight visitors' lifecycle profile is dominated by families and couples, with strong early night demand patterns

The following data (Figure 9) reflects Tourism Research Australia (TRA) household lifecycle segmentation of visitors to the LGA, describing the underlying visitor population structure:

- **Families and couples (no children) dominate visitation (representing 47% of the overnight visitation market):** Families, particularly those with young children, are a key visitor segment, indicating strong demand for evening and early night, family-oriented experiences. Together with couples without children, this forms the primary market, typically associated with dining, leisure, and short-stay visitation behaviour.
- **Older cohorts provide a stable and consistent visitor base (38%):** Older couples and older singles are well represented, supporting a stable year-round visitation base with preferences for safe, amenity-rich, and lower-intensity night-time experiences.
- **Younger and single visitors are present but less dominant (16%):** Younger singles are comparatively limited, despite a moderate midlife single cohort, suggesting weaker demand for late-night activity but some potential for targeted activation in this space.

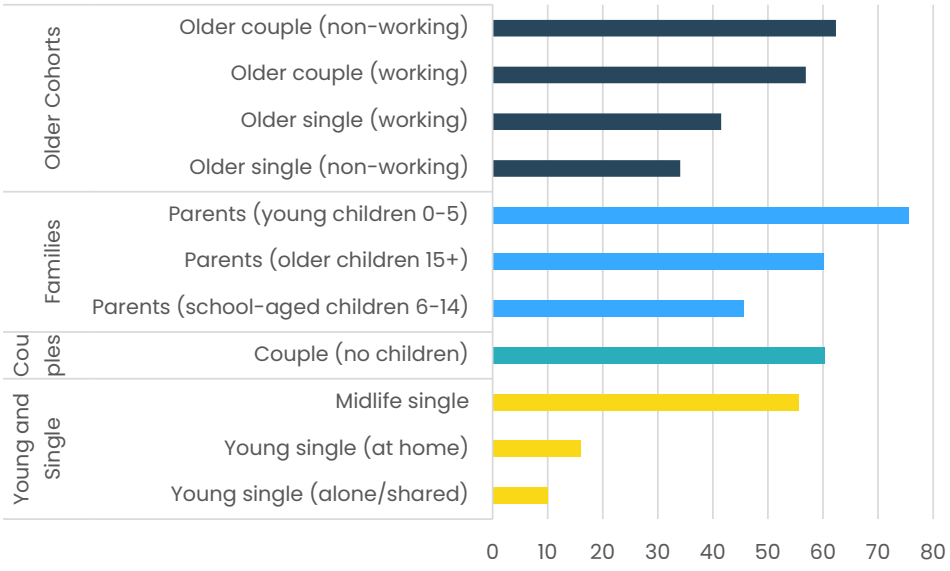

Figure 9: Number of Overnight Trips by Lifecycle Group, 2024
Source: TRA, 2026

Several personas shape early night demand patterns

To better understand who participates in Kiama's night-time economy, TRA's Helix Personas have been grouped into five behavioural persona segments based on their socio-economic profile, life stage, and typical leisure patterns (Figure 10). These segments reflect how different cohorts engage with night-time activity, particularly across "twilight" (5-8:30 pm), early night (6-9 pm), late night (9pm-12 am), and post-work (6-9 pm weekdays) hours.

The five segments are outlined in Table 7 below.

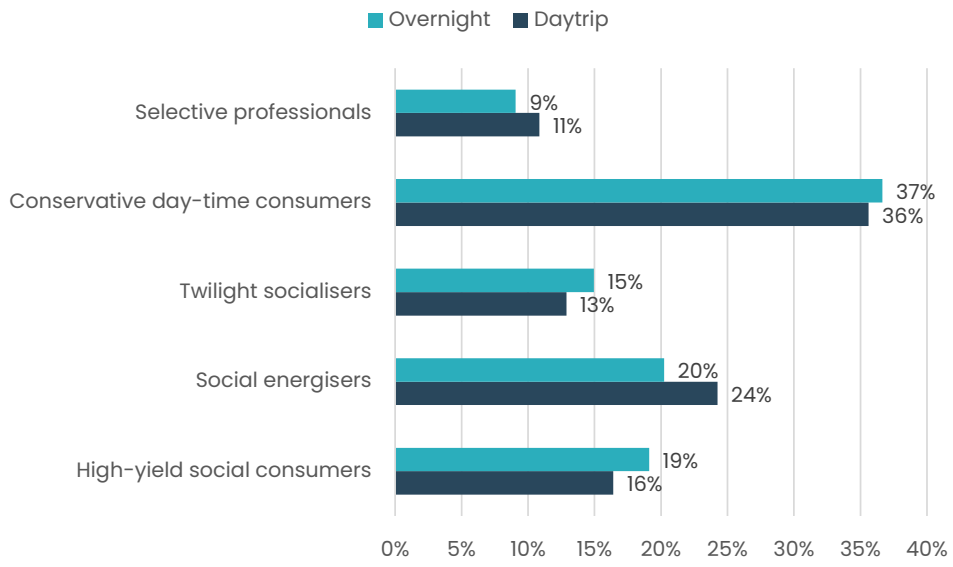

Figure 10: Share of Visitation by Night-Time Persona Segment, Kiama 2024
Source: Geografia, 2026 derived from Helix Personas, TRA, 2026

No.	Segment	Who They Are	Typical Window Time	What to Provide (Night-Time Offer)
1	**High-yield Social Consumers**	Affluent, experience-led visitors (and residents); value quality, atmosphere and premium experiences.	6–10 pm (occasionally later)	High-quality dining, waterfront venues, curated experiences (e.g., degustation), boutique bars, premium, memorable experiences that justify higher spend
2	**Social Energisers**	Younger, socially active cohorts; frequent users and attendees of dining, bars and events; group oriented.	6 pm–late (10 pm–12 am+)	Casual dining, bars, live music, events, and social, group-based experiences that create energy and extend activity into later hours.
3	**Twilight Socialisers**	Families, couples and seniors open to going out but preferring relaxed, safe early evening activity.	5–8:30 pm	Early dining, family-friendly venues, night markets, outdoor dining, waterfront activation, and low-intensity events in

No.	Segment	Who They Are	Typical Window Time	What to Provide (Night-Time Offer)
				well-lit, safe public spaces.
4	**Conservative Daytime Consumers**	Older or home-oriented, budget-conscious cohorts; low engagement in night-time activity.	Daytime–7 pm	Early dining options, takeaway, and accessible and familiar venues; not a primary night-time segment but a potential market for twilight activity.
5	**Selective Professionals**	Time-poor, higher-income workers; participate selectively, often midweek.	6–9 pm (midweek skew)	After-work dining, wellness (gym, yoga), and short-duration, high-quality experiences that fit within limited time windows.

Table 7: Night-Time Persona Segments and Participation Patterns
Source: Geografia, 2026 derived from Helix Personas, TRA, 2026

The distribution of these segments in the LGA reflects a strong early night (6-9 pm) economy, supported by an older resident base and younger visitor demand. As shown in Figure 10, Kiama's night-time participation is dominated by:

- Conservative Daytime Consumers (37% overnight; 36% daytrip).
- Social Energisers (20% overnight; 24% daytrip).
- High-Yield Social Consumers (19% overnight; 16% daytrip).

While Twilight Socialisers (13–15%) represent a smaller segment individually, when combined with Conservative Daytime Consumers, they form a substantial 46-47% early evening ("twilight") market. This highlights the importance of early dining, accessible venues, and low-intensity events as the foundation of the LGA's night-time economy.

At the same time, the combined presence of Social Energisers and High-Yield Social Consumers (39-40%) provides a clear base for more active and experience-based offerings. These segments support events, live music, and curated experiences, indicating that demand for these activities already exists within the current visitor mix.

WHAT THIS MEANS FOR THE NIGHT-TIME STRATEGY

- The rise of overnight visitation presents an opportunity to strengthen the night-time offer, particularly in the early night (6-9 pm). Longer stays are more closely linked to Dining & Entertainment, so there is potential to capture additional spend through early night events, pre-dinner attractions, and accommodation-linked packages that encourage visitors to move between attractions, town centres, and key precincts before night-time activity winds down.
- The night-time economy should be anchored in early night activity (6-9 pm), reflecting the dominance of families and couple-based overnight visitation patterns. This supports a clear focus on strengthening a dining-led offer, complemented by place-based experiences that encourage longer dwell times among these key cohorts, with targeted opportunities to extend into later hours through events and experiences, particularly on weekends and in key precincts.

3.4 RESIDENT AND VISITOR PROFILES

Night-time spending is defined by young visitors and older residents

In 2025, during non-work hours[2] (6 pm-8 am on weekdays and all hours on weekends and public holidays), spending in the LGA showed clear differences between residents and visitors:

- Visitors (18-34): This group accounts for 50% of all visitor expenditure, aligning strongly with the Social Energisers and High-Yield Social Consumers identified in Section 3.3. Males are slightly higher than females (27% vs 23%) (Figure 11).
- Residents (45+): This group accounts for 69% of all resident expenditure, with those 65+ alone representing for 24%. This closely reflects the Conservative Day-Time Consumers and Twilight Socialisers segment. Females contribute slightly more than males (36% vs 33%) (Figure 11).

This reinforces the segmentation findings in Section 3.3, where younger cohorts are more closely associated with visitor-driven, experience-led activity, while older cohorts from a stable base of spending across early night periods.

[2] While night-time specific data for demographics Resident and Visitor Local Spend is not available, this measure serves as a strong proxy.

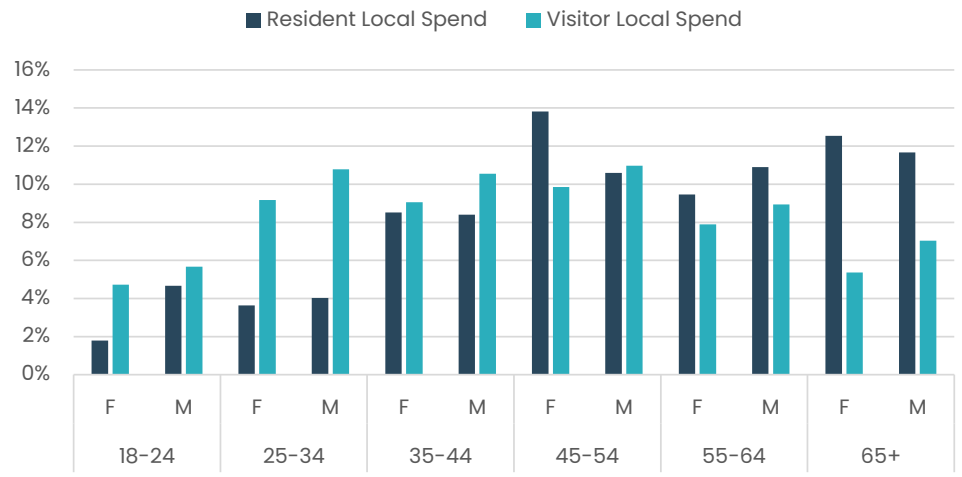

Figure 11: Share of Resident and Visitor Local Spend by Age and Gender, 2025
Source: Spendmapp by Geografia, 2026

WHAT THIS MEANS FOR THE NIGHT-TIME STRATEGY

- The Strategy should reflect the dual structure identified in the persona analysis: an older resident base that drives early night (6-9 pm activity), particularly Conservative Daytime Consumers and Twilight Socialisers, and younger residents and visitors, aligned with Social Energisers and High-Yield Social Consumers, who support later trading, events, and multi-day visitation.
- These groups do not always overlap in terms of timing or behaviour, but both are critical to growth. A balanced approach, supporting strong early night dining alongside later night events and experiences, will help extend activity across the night without overreliance on a single segment.

3.5 WHEN NIGHT-TIME ACTIVITY OCCURS

Night-time spending peaks on Fridays and Saturdays

In 2025, night-time (6 pm-6 am) spending across the five study area towns followed a clear weekly rhythm. Activity was lowest at the start of the week (Monday-Tuesday) and steadily rose through Wednesday and Thursday (Figure 12). Peaks occurred on Friday and Saturday, with Kiama township and Gerringong driving the highest activity. Smaller towns (Gerroa, Jamberoo, and Kiama Downs) mainly contributed to weekend peaks, while midweek activity remained modest.

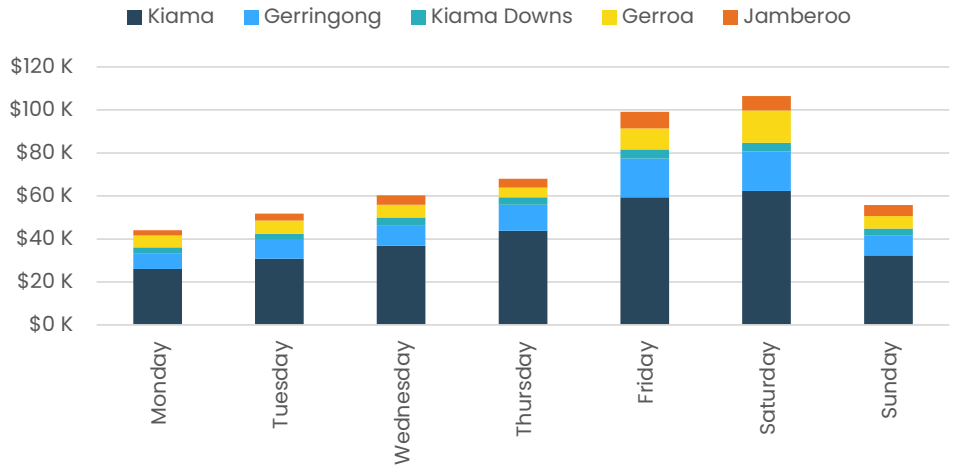

Figure 12: Average Night-Time Spend by Day of the Week and Study Area, 2025
Source: Spendmapp by Geografia, 2026

Night-time activity is concentrated in early evening hours

In 2025, night-time (6 pm-6 am) spending across the LGA was heavily front-loaded into the early night (6-9 pm) (Figure 13). Most spending occurred during this period, peaking on Fridays and Saturdays, while activity from 9 pm dropped sharply, and between midnight and before 6 pm, it was minimal. This highlights that night-time activity is currently focused on the early evening.

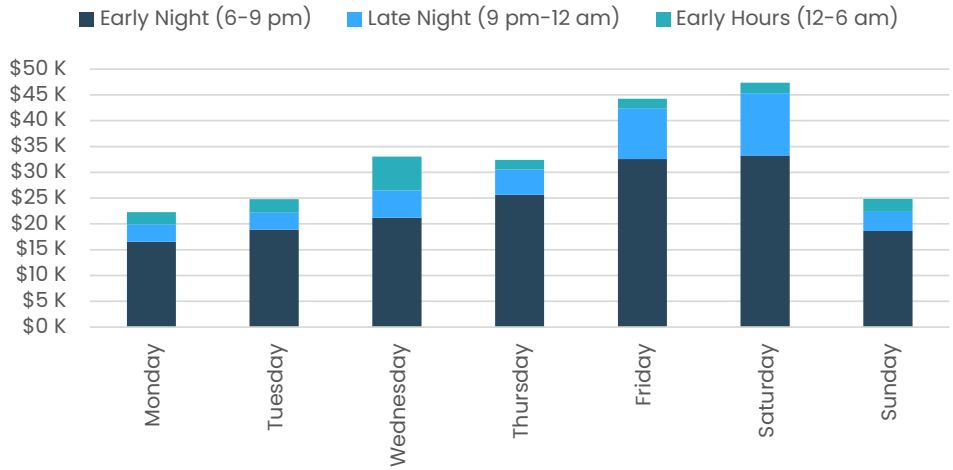

Figure 13: Average Night-Time Spend by Day of the Week and Time, Kiama LGA, 2025
Source: Spendmapp by Geografia, 2026

The night-time economy is highly seasonal, peaking in summer

In 2025, night-time (6 pm-6 am) spending across the LGA had a strong seasonal pattern[3]. Activity peaked in summer, with December and January exceeding the monthly average ($3.91 M) by 48% and 34%, respectively, reflecting both holiday visitation and seasonal resident activity (Figure 14). In contrast, winter months (June-August) recorded the lowest night-time spending, with activity gradually picking up from October and continuing through March.

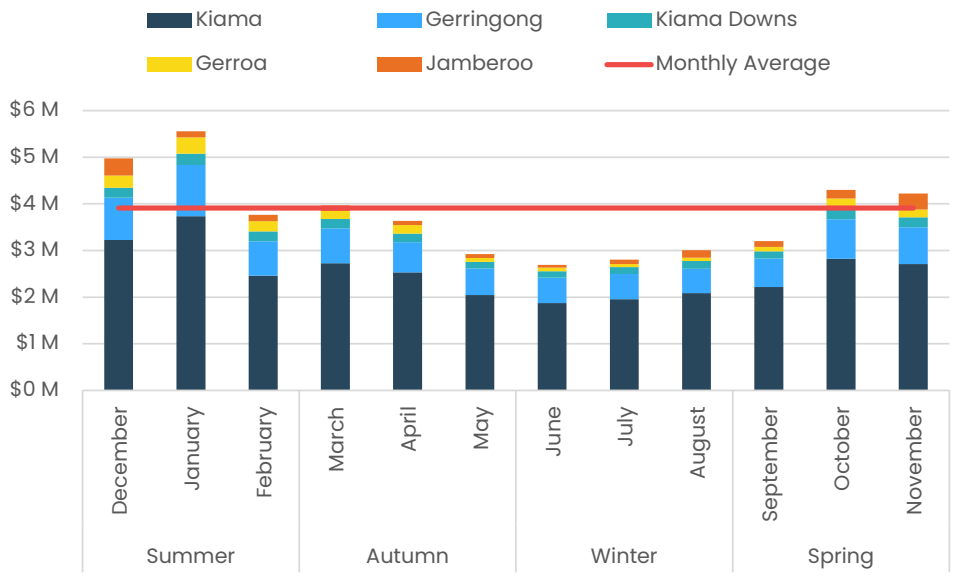

Figure 14: Monthly Night-Time Spend by Study Area, 2025
Source: Spendmapp by Geografia, 2026

WHAT THIS MEANS FOR THE NIGHT-TIME STRATEGY

- Targeting initiatives on Friday and Saturday evenings are likely to have the greatest immediate impact, prioritising Kiama township and Gerringong as the core locations. Complementary support for smaller towns can help broaden the night-time economy and encourage weekend activity across the LGA.
- Extending trading hours and programming beyond the evening (e.g., into twilight hours and early night hours) could increase overall night-time spend, while early night initiatives on on Fridays and Saturdays remain the most effective for immediate outcomes, with longer-term opportunities to broaden activity across more days of the week.

[3] This seasonal pattern is consistent with previous analysis across Australia.

- While summer drives the bulk of night-time activity, there is potential to strengthen off-peak months. Targeted events, promotions, and extended experiences in winter and shoulder seasons (e.g., winter dining offers, small-scale indoor live music) could help smooth spending, maintain vibrancy year-round, and build a more resilient night-time economy across all towns.

3.6 RESIDENT ESCAPE SPEND AND MARKET GAPS

Residents are choosing to spend beyond the municipality after hours

In 2025, Kiama LGA residents spent $133.85 M outside the municipality during non-work hours[4] (6 pm-8 am on weekdays and all hours on weekends and public holidays) (Figure 15). By contrast, only $58.15 M was spent locally, showing more than twice the resident spend is escaping the LGA for other centres and destinations.

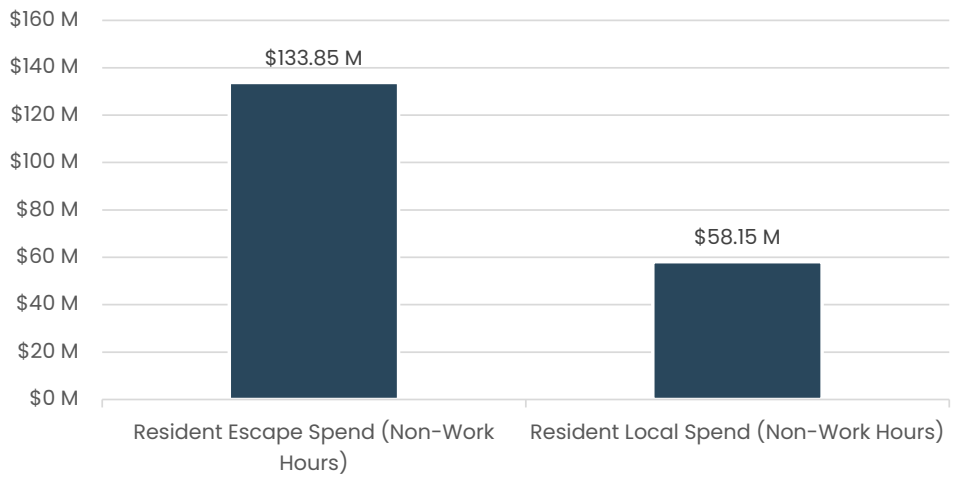

Figure 15: Resident Local and Escape Spend (Non-Work Hours), 2025
Source: Spendmapp by Geografia, 2026

Dining & Entertainment drives escape spend

Dining & Entertainment accounts for 27% ($15.24 M) non-work hours[5] escape spend. Residents mainly travel to nearby regional centres and Sydney, with Wollongong ($1.78 M), Shellharbour City ($1.17 M), and Sydney ($1.17 M) attracting the highest spend.

[4] While night-time-specific data for Resident Escape Spend is not available, this measure serves as a strong proxy.
[5] While night-time-specific data for Resident Escape Spend is not available, this measure serves as a strong proxy.

Smaller towns such as Shell Cove, Berry, and Albion Park Rail also capture notable shares, indicating that residents are leaving them for both major destinations and nearby alternatives (Table 8).

Destination Suburb	LGA	Spend by Kiama LGA Residents (2025)
Wollongong	Wollongong	$1.78 M
Shellharbour City Centre	Shellharbour	$1.17 M
Sydney	Sydney	$1.17 M
Shellharbour	Shellharbour	$1.05 M
Shell Cove	Shellharbour	$832.57 K
Berry	Shoalhaven	$766.66 K
Albion Park Rail	Shellharbour	$714.17 K
Albion Park	Shellharbour	$274.98 K
Nowra	Shoalhaven	$262.34 K
Warrawong	Wollongong	$255.45 K

Table 8: Top Destinations for Dining & Entertainment Resident Escape Spend, 2025
This data if for non-work hours spend. Source: Geografia, 2026

Kiama township remains the leading local night-time destination

Despite outward spending, Kiama itself anchors local night-time Dining & Entertainment, attracting $6.35 M from residents in 2025, more than any single destination outside the LGA. Gerringong ($1.02 M) and Kiama Downs ($621.68 K) follow, with smaller contributions from Jamberoo and Gerroa (Table 9).

Study Area Towns	Spend by Kiama LGA Residents
Kiama	$6.35 M
Gerringong	$1.02 M
Kiama Downs	$621.68 K
Jamberoo	$319.89 K
Gerroa	$57.87 K

Table 9: Resident Local Night-Time Spend by Study Area Towns, 2025
Source: Geografia, 2026

WHAT THIS MEANS FOR THE NIGHT-TIME STRATEGY

- Strengthening night-time and weekend offerings and experiences within Kiama township and surrounding towns could capture more resident spend and reduce leakage to other night-time destinations. This is likely to require a combination of retail gap analysis, targeted business attraction, and enabling conditions for extended trading and improved evening amenity.
- Dining & Entertainment is a key driver of residents' spending outside the LGA, highlighting a clear opportunity to grow the night-time economy by recapturing this leakage. Expanding and diversifying local Dining & Entertainment offerings could help retain more resident expenditure and strengthen the local night-time economy.
- Building on Kiama township's strong position, while diversifying offerings across all study area towns, can help retain more resident spend, increase night-time vibrancy, and strengthen the overall economy. Diversification should focus on complementary, place-based offerings in other towns that do not replicate or compete with Kiama township's core roles.

3.7 WHERE NIGHT-TIME ACTIVITY HAPPENS

Google Places API data was used to map the distribution of businesses and points of interest across the five study area towns by category and help reveal where night-time (6 pm-4 am) activity occurs. Figures 16 to 21 map businesses and points of interest by category, with a focused view on areas of highest concentration (i.e., Kiama township).

It was noted:

- **All Categories** destinations form a large cluster in Kiama township's retail/commercial core, primarily along Terralong Street from Kiama Village Shopping Centre to Shoalhaven Street and extending north along Collins Street. This confirms that Kiama township anchors the municipality's night-time economy, in line with findings from spend data, and provides a clear basis for delineating night-time precinct boundaries.
- **Food and Drink** activity closely aligns with the All Categories cluster, concentrated along Kiama township's main shopping strip (Terralong and Collins Street). As hospitality is a natural night-time activator, this reinforces the township as the primary focus for night-time strategy initiatives, where targeted support can quickly strengthen evening vibrancy.
- **Cultural** destinations are mainly coastal and linked to historical landmarks, such as Kiama Lighthouse and Cameron Boyd Reserve. As accessible public spaces, they attract residents and visitors in the evening for leisure, sightseeing, and informal gatherings. These may be an opportunity for cultural programming and temporary activations that extend night-time activity.

- Entertainment and Recreation destinations are dispersed beyond the township core. Key sites such as Little Blowhole, Headland Lookout, Kiama Leisure Centre, and Gainsborough Oval show that night-time recreation activity extends beyond the main shopping strip, often supported by unrestricted public access or extended opening hours.

  This distribution presents opportunities to integrate these experiences into broader night-time precinct planning. However, these destinations are primarily recreational rather than entertainment-focused, highlighting an opportunity to develop more evening entertainment experiences to complement the hospitality core and diversify the night-time economy.
- Health and Wellness offerings, yoga studios, allied health, and healthcare services are found both inside and outside of main commercial strips. Their presence in the evening indicates a post-work night-time economy, serving residents who engage in personal wellbeing and fitness after typical business hours. This highlights that night-time activity is not just about leisure or entertaining but also about supporting diverse local routines.
- Shopping activity at night is mostly concentrated around supermarkets, local grocers, and convenience retail, including in smaller towns and areas such as Kiama Downs and the south end of Kiama township. These locations serve residents' everyday needs during evening hours, highlighting that night-time activity also includes practical, routine spending, even if it does not contribute strongly to vibrancy or destination appeal.

WHAT THIS MEANS FOR THE NIGHT-TIME STRATEGY

- Focus initial night-time strategy initiatives on Kiama township's retail/commercial core (Terralong Street and Collins Street), where Food & Drink activity is concentrated, as hospitality is a natural activator of night-time vibrancy.
- Use coastal cultural destinations (e.g., Kiama Lighthouse, Cameron Boyd Reserve) as temporary activations or cultural programming to encourage evening visitation and extend night-time activity.
- Explore opportunities for more entertainment-focused venues or experiences to diversify the night-time economy and complement the hospitality anchor.
- Support post-work Health and Wellness activity through extended hours or evening programs, recognising that night-time activity also includes resident routines, including younger residents seeking fitness or wellbeing options after work.
- Maintain and potentially expand convenience shopping options in smaller towns (where demand exists) to meet residents' everyday needs and sustain consistent night-time footfall across the municipality.
- Use these mapped clusters of activity to inform potential SEP boundaries, prioritising high-concentration areas while also identifying emerging nodes for targeted strategic investment.

All Categories

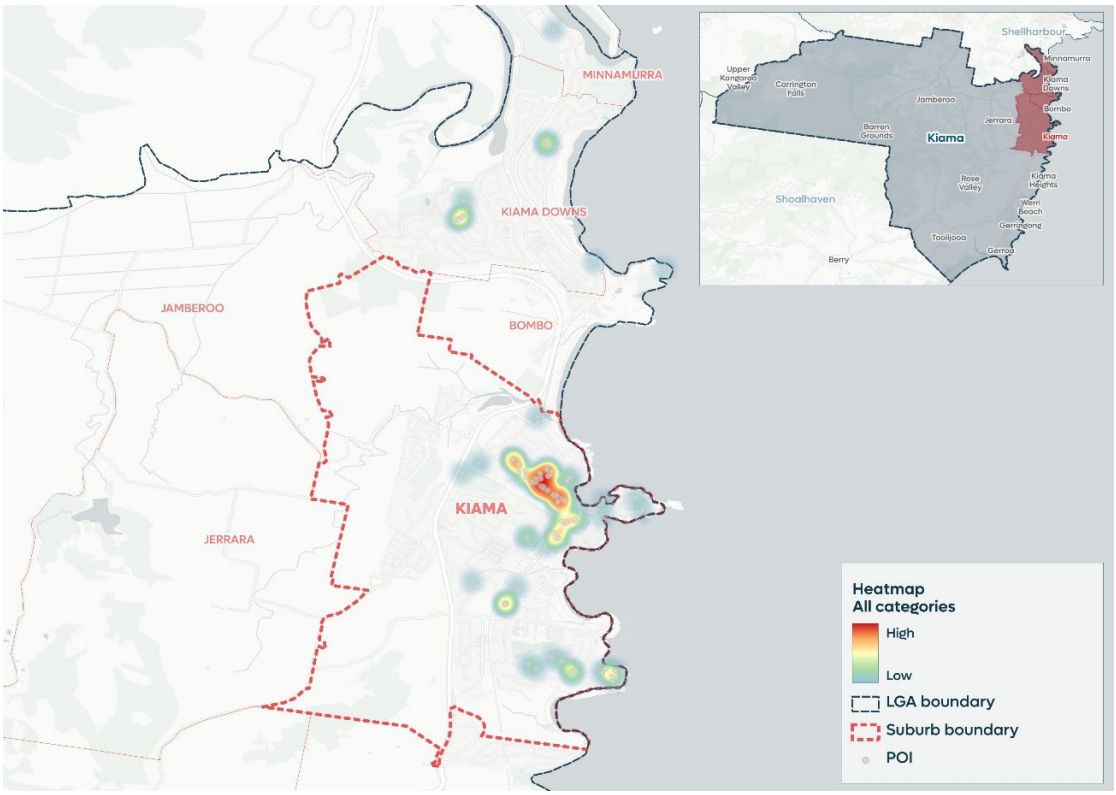

Figure 16: Distribution of Businesses and Points of Interests – All Categories
Source: Google Places API, 2026, compiled by Geografia, 2026

Food and Drink

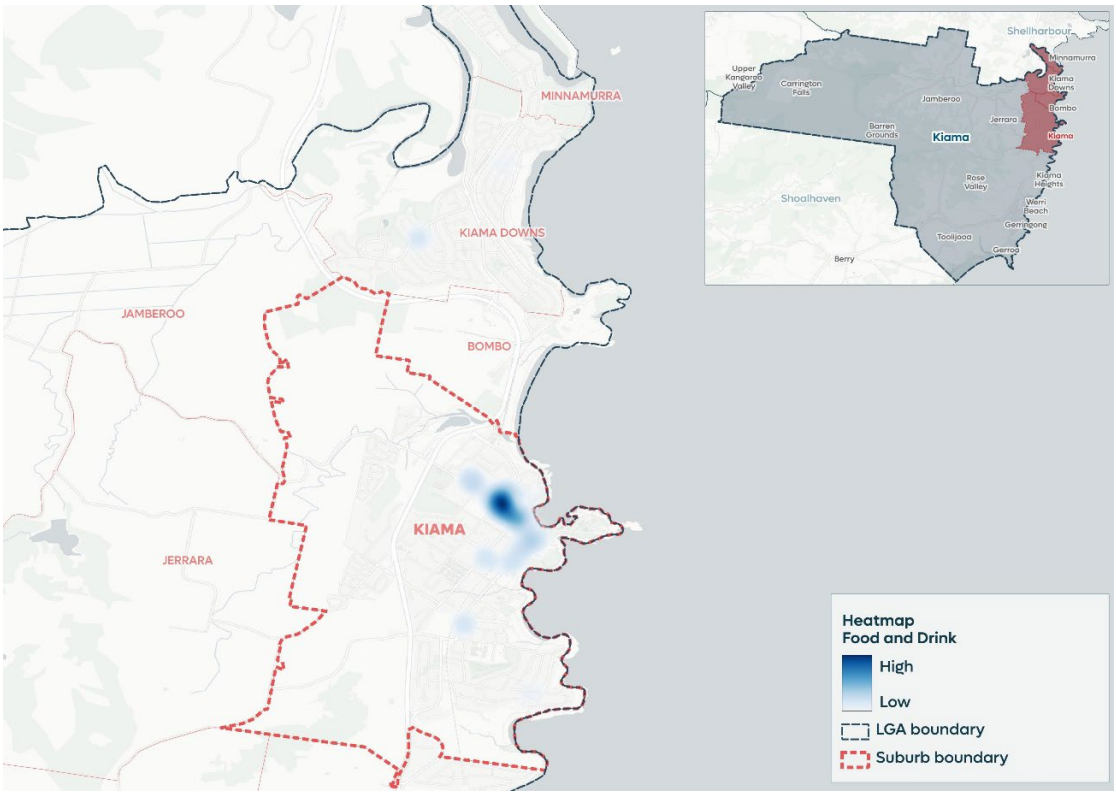

Figure 17: Distribution of Businesses and Points of Interests – Food and Drink
Source: Google Places API, 2026, compiled by Geografia, 2026

Culture

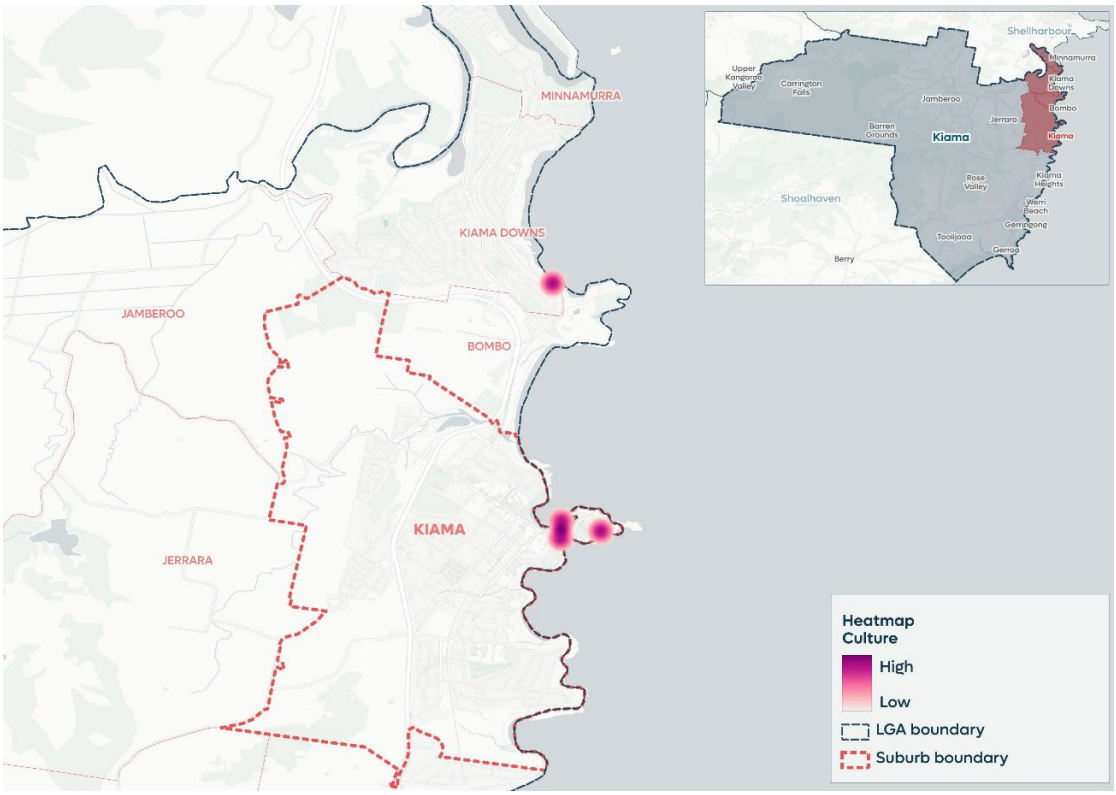

Figure 18: Distribution of Businesses and Points of Interests – Culture
Source: Google Places API, 2026, compiled by Geografia, 2026

Entertainment and Recreation

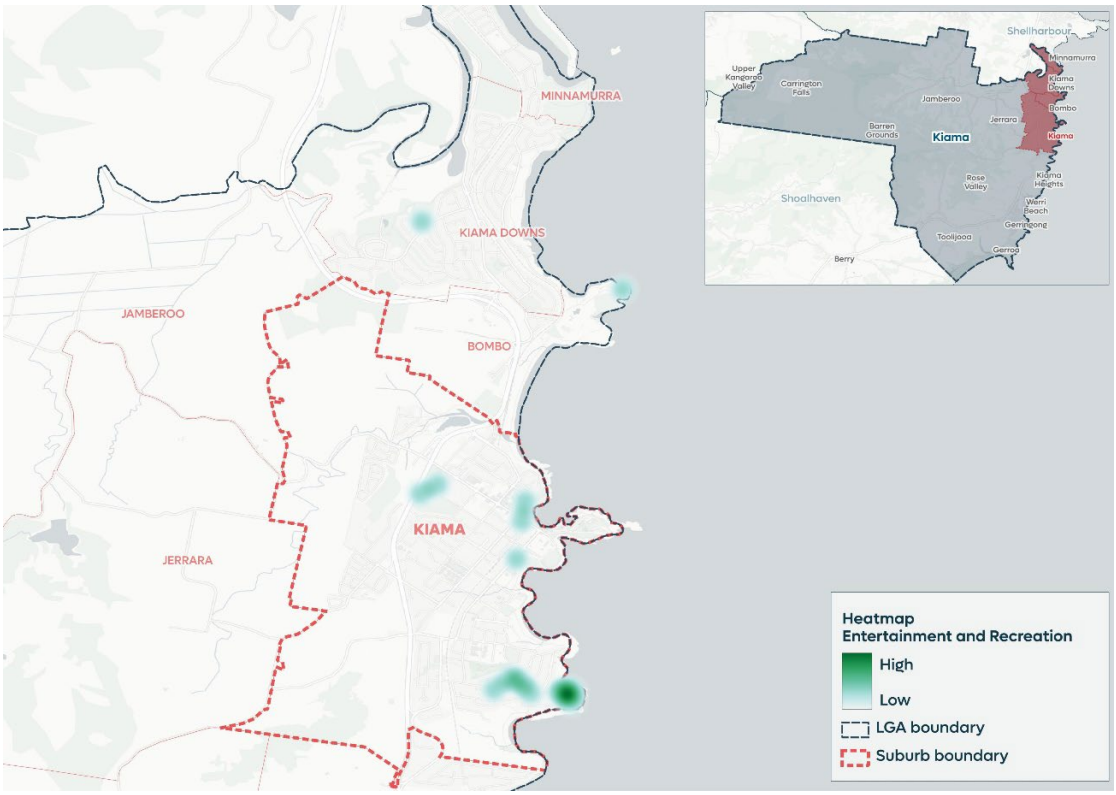

Figure 19: Distribution of Businesses and Points of Interests – Entertainment and Recreation
Source: Google Places API, 2026, compiled by Geografia, 2026

Health and Wellness

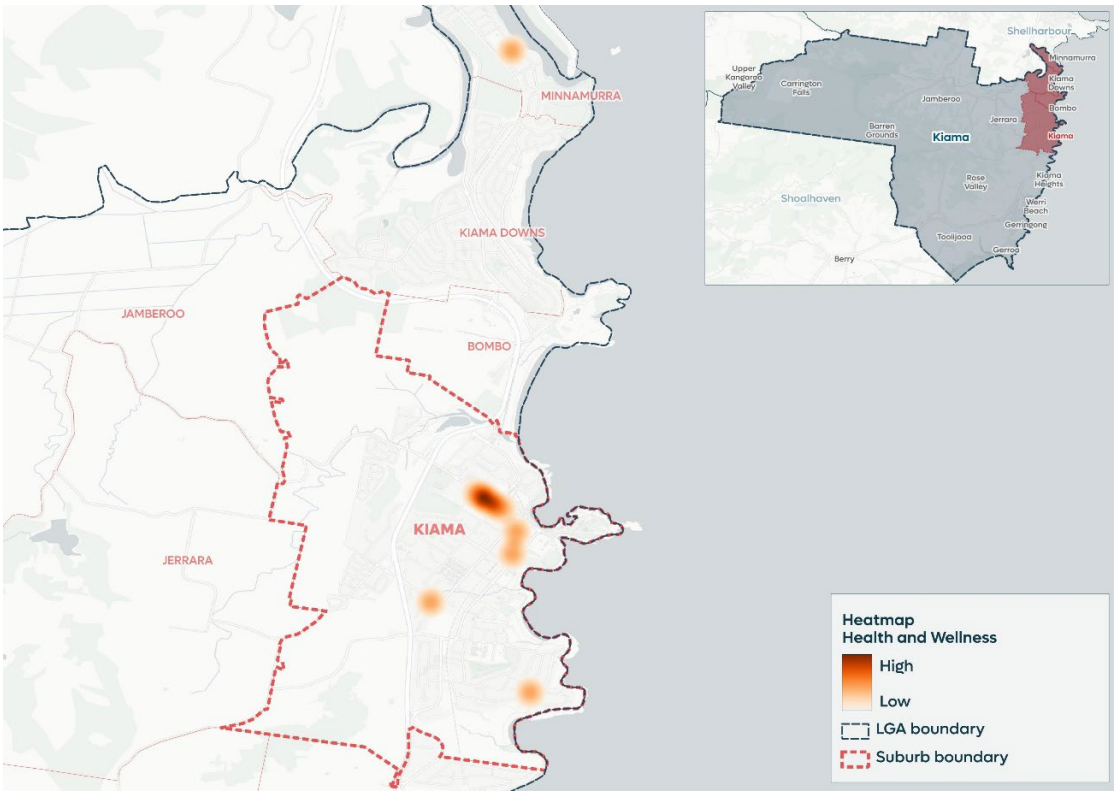

Figure 20: Distribution of Businesses and Points of Interests – Health and Wellness
Source: Google Places API, 2026, compiled by Geografia, 2026

Shopping

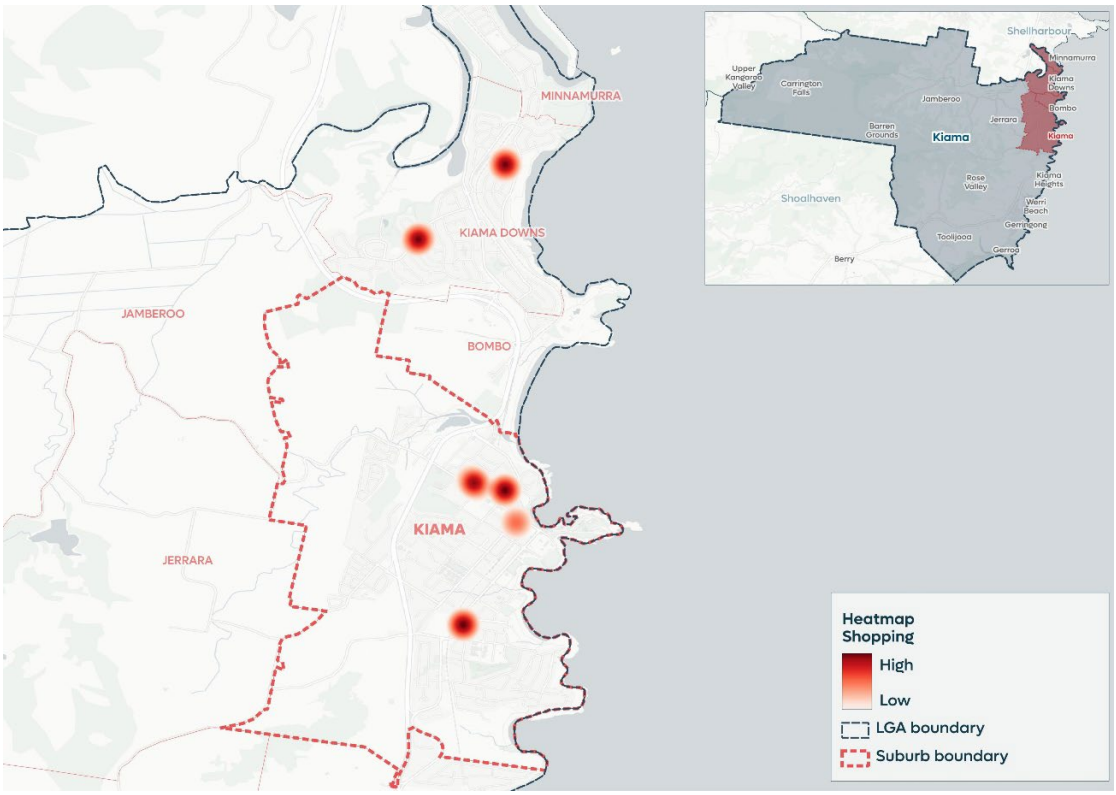

Figure 21: Distribution of Businesses and Points of Interests – Shopping
Source: Google Places API, 2026, compiled by Geografia, 2026

3.8 BENCHMARKING AND NIGHT-TIME GROWTH OPPORTUNITIES

The current size and key characteristics of Kiama LGA's night-time economy were benchmarked against regional LGAs in NSW and QLD. This included both peer LGAs (similar population, coastal location, and tourism profile) and 'aspirational' LGAs (similar economic structure but with more developed night-time economies).

The analysis focused on four key questions about Kiama LGA's night-time economy:

1. How does the scale of Kiama's night-time economy compare?
2. Which categories dominate the night-time economy?
3. What is the relative contribution of residents versus visitors?
4. To what extent is resident spending escaping the municipality?

The benchmark LGAs were analysed using the following spend indicators:

1. **Night-time spend as a proportion of the total spend** – useful for understanding whether the scale of the local night-time economy is large or low compared with the entire economy and with benchmark LGAs. Setting targets with this indicator can be used as a night-time economy objective.
2. **Night-time spend split between Dining & Entertainment and All Other Categories** – useful for identifying the expenditure categories with a relative dominance in the night-time economy.
3. **Night-time spend split between residents and visitors** – provides insight into the relative contribution of resident versus visitor spending to the night-time economy.
4. **Resident Escape Spend during non-work hours as a proportion of Resident Escape Spend and Resident Local Spend** – highlights patterns of resident spending outside usual work hours and the extent to which residents contribute to the night-time economy.

The results of this benchmarking exercise are summarised in Table 10, with key findings outlined in the sections that follow.

LGAs	Night-Time Spend as a Share of Total Spend	Night-Time Spend by Category		Night-Time Spend by Expenditure Type		Non-Work Hours by Resident Spend	
		Dining & Entertainment Share	All Other Categories Share	Resident Local Spend Share	Visitor Local Spend Share	Resident Escape Spend Share	Resident Local Spend Share
Kiama LGA	**13%**	**62%**	**38%**	**40%**	**60%**	**70%**	**30%**
Regional NSW LGAs	11-15%	34-41%	59-66%	49-70%	30-51%	27-41%	59-73%
Regional QLD LGAs	8-11%	34-36%	64-66%	71%	29%	26-27%	73-74%

Table 10: Benchmarking Analysis, 2025
Source: Geografia, 2026

Kiama LGA's night-time economy is in line with comparable regional LGAs, but relies heavily on visitors

In 2025, Kiama LGA's night-time economy accounted for 13% of the total economy, placing it at the upper end of regional NSW LGAs (11-15%) and above QLD regional

LGAs (8-11%). This indicates that, overall, Kiama LGA has a relatively healthy night-time economy for a regional coastal LGA.

A closer look at the composition of night-time spend highlights key differences:

- **Category mix:** Night-time activity in Kiama LGA is heavily concentrated in Dining & Entertainment (62%), higher than regional NSW (34-41%) and QLD (34-36%) LGAs. This shows the night-time economy is strongly oriented towards leisure and social experiences rather than a broader mix of services and retail.
- **Spending by expenditure type:** Visitors contribute 60% of night-time spend in Kiama LGA, compared with 30-51% in regional NSW LGAs and 26-27% in regional QLD LGAs. Residents account for the remaining 40%, forming a stable base of local spending but with limited relative impact.
- **Resident behaviour outside work hours:** Kiama LGA residents' escape spend during non-work hours is high at 70%, indicating that a large share of resident expenditure is leaving the LGA for other destinations, which is higher than the range observed in regional NSW (27-41%) and regional QLD (26-27%) LGAs.

These patterns point to a night-time economy that is both strong and visitor-driven, but one that is heavily concentrated in Dining & Entertainment and experiencing leakage of resident spend to nearby regional centres.

Persona benchmarking reveals a more socially active visitor mix and strong early night opportunity in the Kiama LGA

To complement the night-time expenditure activity benchmarking, Kiama LGA's night-time economy has been assessed against regional NSW and QLD LGAs using the five behavioural persona segments outlined in Section 3.3. This provides insight into how the composition of users differs across locations, and the extent to which Kiama's night-time economy is shaped by its demographic profile and visitor mix.

As shown in Figures 22 and 23, Kiama LGA exhibits a distinct persona profile compared to benchmark LGAs. Overall, Kiama LGA's visitor profile is somewhat more socially active than regional NSW and QLD LGAs, particularly in the daytrip market.

Key differences in the daytrip market include:

- **Lower share of Conservative Daytime Consumers:** 36% in Kiama LGA compared to 43% in benchmark LGAs (Figure 22).
- **Higher share of Social Energisers:** 24% in Kiama LGA compared to 18-19% in benchmark LGAs, particularly among daytrip visitors.

For the overnight market, the differences are more nuanced:

- **Stronger presence of High-Yield Social Consumers:** 19% in Kiama LGA compared to 16% in benchmark LGAs (Figure 23).

- **Social Energisers broadly align with benchmarks:** 20% in Kiama LGA compared to 20% (NSW) and 19% (QLD).
- **Conservative Daytime Consumers remain the largest segment**, but a lower share (35%) compared to regional NSW (41%) and regional QLD (42%) LGAs.

In both markets:

- Twilight Socialisers (typically older couples and families open to early evening (5-8:30 pm) activity) account for a relatively modest share of visitors (around 13–15%) across the Kiama LGA and comparable regional LGAs in both the daytrip (Figure 22) and overnight (Figure 23) markets.
- While Twilight Socialisers play an important role in anchoring early evening demand, its limited size suggests that twilight activity cannot rely on this group alone. Instead, successful early evening activation needs to appeal to a broader mix of segments, including Social Engineers and High-Yield Social Consumers, through more diverse and engaging offers.

Overall, this reinforces earlier findings (Section 3.3) that Kiama's visitor market is not just family- and couple-oriented, but also slightly more socially active and experience-oriented than comparable regional LGAs. This provides some additional scope to support more varied night-time activity than benchmark averages might suggest, although the market remains firmly anchored in the early night.

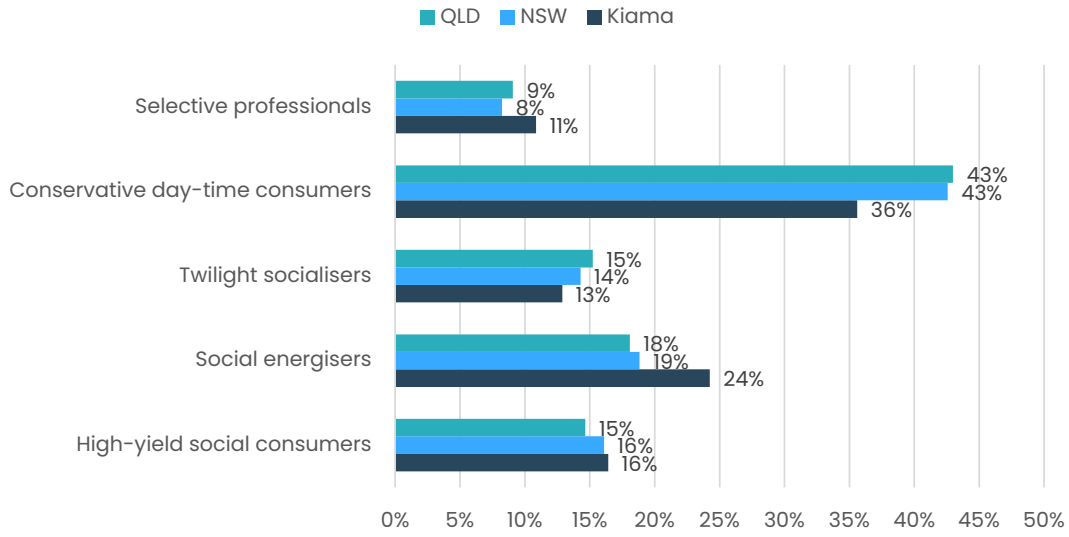

Figure 22: Share of Daytrip Visitation by Night-Time Persona Segment, 2024
Source: Geografia, 2026, derived from Helix Personas, TRA 2026. Regional NSW is defined by Coastal NSW and the Hunter Region, and Regional QLD is defined by the Sunshine Coast and the Gold Coast Regions.

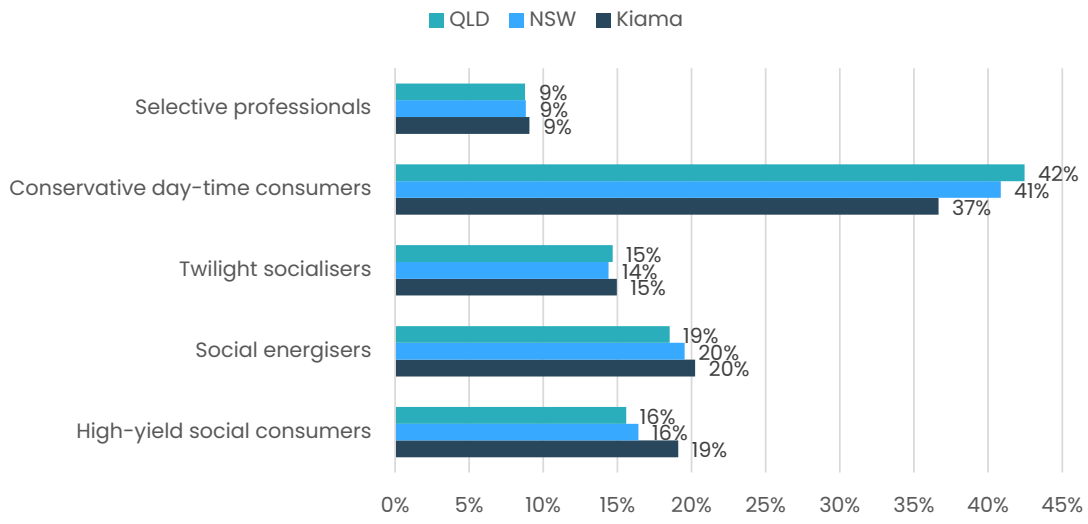

Figure 23: Share of Overnight Visitation by Night-Time Persona Segment, 2024
Source: Geografia, 2026 derived from Helix Personas, TRA, 2026. Regional NSW is defined by Coastal NSW and the Hunter Region, and Regional QLD is defined by the Sunshine Coast and the Gold Coast Regions.

WHAT THIS MEANS FOR THE NIGHT-TIME STRATEGY

- Kiama's night-time economy is performing strongly relative to peers but is narrow in composition and heavily reliant on visitors, with a significant share of resident spending occurring outside the LGA. This presents a clear opportunity to diversify night-time offerings and strengthen local demand, while continuing to build on its visitor appeal.
- The presence of socially active and higher-yield visitor segments in the Kiama LGA, particularly daytrip visitors, indicates that demand for more diverse and extended night-time activity already exists. Rather than needing to generate new tourism demand, the focus should be on better catering to these segments through a broader mix of dining, events, and evening experiences that extend beyond the current twilight offer. This presents an opportunity to capture untapped spend, increase dwell time, and modestly extend activity into later hours, while remaining anchored in an early night-led economy.

4.0 Conclusion

The analysis reveals a night-time economy that is strong in scale but uneven in its form. It is highly concentrated in Kiama township, reliant on Dining & Entertainment and visitor spend, and experiencing significant leakage of resident expenditure to other night-time destinations. Against this backdrop, three broad opportunities emerge to better stimulate and support the Kiama LGA's night-time economy.

1. Adopt a hierarchy approach to night-time development

Economic data indicates that Kiama township is the clear focus of night-time activity across the LGA. However, from a community development and strategic planning perspective, there is also a need to support activity in other townships to meet local needs and broaden participation.

Kiama township should remain the primary night-time hub, concentrating higher-order dining, entertainment, and visitor activity. Growth beyond this should follow a clear activity centre hierarchy, with Gerringong and Kiama Downs playing secondary roles, and smaller towns focusing on distinct, place-based night-time offerings.

2. Grow the early night-time economy off strengths in young family visitor markets

The night-time economy is currently concentrated in Dining & Entertainment, with limited diversity in the types of experiences available in the early evening. At the same time, Kiama's visitor profile is dominated by young families and socially active cohorts, indicating strong demand for accessible early night (6-9 pm) activity.

There is an opportunity to build on this by strengthening the early night economy, expanding beyond dining into twilight retail, after-work services, and wellness and lifestyle activities. This should be supported by targeted events and programming that extend activity within this period and encourage longer stays.

Improving the variety, quality, and setting of experiences will be critical to retaining both residents and visitors. Expanding evening service-based activity, including health, education and professional services, can also support a more consistent level of activity and increase utilisation of centres outside peak dining periods.

This is particularly important given the current persona mix, where Social Energisers and High-Yield Social Consumers have limited local options in the early evening and are more likely to spend in competing regional centres.

3. Recapture leaked resident expenditure to build a more balanced, year-round night-time economy

Kiama's night-time economy is strongly visitor-driven, with a large share of resident spending occurring outside the LGA. This represents a direct opportunity to grow the local night-time economy by recapturing escaped spend, particularly in Dining & Entertainment and broader leisure experiences.

Growth should be anchored in the early night (6–9 pm), where demand is strongest and aligns with both resident behaviour and visitor expectations. While Twilight Socialisers underpin this period, they represent a relatively modest share of the overall market. Expanding participation from other segments, including Social Energisers and High-Yield Social Consumers, will be important to increasing activity and spend.

At the same time, there is an opportunity to strengthen the resident market as a stable base of demand, reducing reliance on visitors and improving consistency across the week and year. This includes improving the range and quality of local offerings, as well as understanding and responding to the drivers of travel to nearby centres such as Wollongong and Shellharbour.

Targeted off-peak events and programming can also help smooth seasonal variation, supporting a more balanced, year-round pattern of night-time activity.

Setting the strategic direction for the Night-Time Strategy

These themes set the strategic direction. Table 11 translates them into targeted actions and measurable outcomes, forming the basis for ongoing monitoring and a future impact assessment of the Kiama Night-Time Strategy.

Key Finding	Recommended Strategic Direction	Success Metrics and KPI (Source in Brackets)
Strong night-time economy (13% of total expenditure activity)	• Build on the strong base by expanding essential and service-based activity, including healthcare, education and training, and professional services that operate into the early night. This supports a local night-time workforce, providing a more stable, non-visitor-dependent demand base for surrounding hospitality and retail.	Night-time value-add share of total economy activity: 38% ↑ (CityCompass) Night-time spending share: 13% → 14-15% (Spendmapp) Night-time employment: ↑ (CityCompass) Number of businesses open at

Key Finding	Recommended Strategic Direction	Success Metrics and KPI (Source in Brackets)
		6-9 pm across the Kiama LGA: ↑ (Google Places API)
Highly concentrated activity in Kiama township	• Adopt a clear activity centre hierarchy, reinforcing Kiama township as the primary night-time hub, with Gerringong and Kiama Downs as secondary centres and smaller towns playing a complementary, place-based role. • Focus investment and activation in Kiama township, while enabling tailored, locally relevant offerings in secondary centres.	Kiama township share of total night-time spend: 65% → 55–60% (Spendmapp) Secondary centres share of total night-time spend: 35% → 40–45% (Spendmapp)
Resident profile skewed towards older cohorts	• Strengthen the twilight and early night economy for older residents, including early dining, retail, and low-intensity social activities aligned with local demand. • Prioritise accessibility, safety, lighting and, amenity to support confidence and consistent participation in the early night period.	Early night (6–9 pm) share of total night-time spend: ↑ (Spendmapp) Older cohort (65+) share of total non-work hours spend: ↑ (Spendmapp)
Visitor profile skews toward young couples and families	• Prioritise family-friendly and experience-based offerings, such as night markets, outdoor dining, and small-scale events, aligning with the LGA's early evening-oriented visitor profile. • Ensure public environments are safe, welcoming and accessible to increase participation across key groups, including families, women and (complementing the local) older resident profile, reinforcing the LGA's positioning as a relaxed coastal destination.	Social Energisers share of daytrip visitation: 24% → 24–28% (Geografia, TRA) High-Yield Social Consumers of overnight share: 19% → 19–22% (Geografia, TRA) Conservative Daytime Consumers of daytrip and overnight visitation shares: 36–37% → 34–36% (Geografia, TRA) 18-34 female share of total non-work hours spend: ↑ (Spendmapp)

Key Finding	Recommended Strategic Direction	Success Metrics and KPI (Source in Brackets)
High dependence on summer periods	• Develop a targeted off-peak events and programming strategy, including winter festivals and shoulder-season activations, to smooth seasonal demand and support more consistent year-round activity.	Share of total night-time spend outside Dec–Jan: ↑ (Spendmapp)
High reliance on Dining & Entertainment spend	• Diversify the night-time offer beyond dining by supporting twilight and early night retail, extended trading hours, and complementary uses such as night markets and small-format pop-up retail. • Encourage growth in after-work services (e.g. gyms, personal services) to strengthen early night activity and extend dwell time. This includes tapping into the emerging night-time health and wellness market, such as evening yoga classes, wellness studios, and experiential offerings (e.g., night spa and bathing), particularly in leisure and non-centre locations. • Develop targeted events and programming to extend activity beyond dining, including small-scale festivals, live music, and seasonal events. This can increase length of stay, attract new audiences, and provide reasons to visit beyond peak dining periods.	Dining & Entertainment share of total night-time spend: 62% → 50–55% (Spendmapp) All Other Categories share of total night-time spend: 38% → 45–50% (Spendmapp)
High visitor spend share	• Continue to support visitor-driven growth while strengthening the resident market to stabilise demand year-round. This includes improving the consistency and accessibility of local offerings to reduce reliance on seasonal peaks. • Encourage greater local utilisation in smaller townships and secondary centres, where activity is currently more reliant on visitors. Strengthening everyday offerings and accessibility can help build a more consistent local customer base alongside visitor demand.	Visitor share of total night-time: 60% → 50–55% (Spendmapp) Resident share of total night-time spend: 40% → 45–50% (Spendmapp)
High levels of Resident Escape Spend	• Prioritise recapturing resident spend in key leakage categories, particularly Dining & Entertainment and broader leisure experiences, where a significant share of expenditure currently occurs outside the LGA. • Investigate the drivers of resident leakage to travel to nearby regional centres (e.g., Wollongong, Shellharbour) and respond by improving variety, quality, and setting of	Resident Escape Spend share of total non-work hours spend: 70% → 55–60% (Spendmapp) Resident Local Spend share of total non-work hours spend:

Key Finding	Recommended Strategic Direction	Success Metrics and KPI (Source in Brackets)
	local offerings to better compete for discretionary spend.	30% → 40–45% (Spendmapp)

Table 11: Strategic Directions and Success Metrics for the Kiama Night-Time Strategy
Source: Geografia, 2026

KIAMA MUNICIPAL COUNCIL
your council, your community

Community Consultation - Engagement Summary
Kiama Night-Time Economy Strategy

The Kiama Night-Time Economy (NTE) Strategy engagement program was designed by Reactivate Consulting to be clear, accessible and locally grounded, ensuring the development of a future night-time economy strategy that reflects Kiama's character, while also supporting practical implementation and decision-making. The resulting Strategy has been developed following extensive consultation with Council and businesses, feedback from community, and alignment with Government benchmarks and industry best practice.

Consultation period

1 April 2026 – 28 May 2026

Promotional activities

Dedicated Your Say Page | Online community survey | Media release | Social media posts (13K reach – FB + IG) | Postcards distributed across the LGA | Article in The Bugle newspaper | Community pop-ups (IGA Gerringong + Kiama Farmers Market) | Business Workshop | Council-led business engagement | Youth engagement survey | Informal engagement, in person

How community got involved

7,500+	634	200+	300+	200+	30+	155	67
aware via the Bugle Newspaper	website visitors	pop-up participants	survey responses	contributions from Business Workshop participants	local businesses engaged with	NTE database signups	youth survey responses

What we heard

Key insights gained through the engagement, across the multiple touchpoints outlined above, included:

- Kiama's night-time economy is widely perceived as underdeveloped.
- Strong community support exists for increased after-dark activity.
- Residents want more diverse, non-alcohol-focused experiences.
- Need to focus on early evening economy rather than late-night nightlife.
- Priority should be given to community-friendly, social, outdoor experiences.

What's next

Once signed off by Council's working group, the Draft Kiama Night-Time Economy Strategy will be placed on public exhibition for 28 days, giving the community and stakeholders the opportunity to review and provide feedback. If required, further amendments may be made to the Strategy following this feedback period, after which it will be presented for endorsement by Council at an upcoming regular meeting.

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How we engaged

A range of internal, key stakeholder and community engagement activities have provided vital insight into future planning for a more vibrant and dynamic night-time economy in the Kiama LGA. These activities have been summarised below.

Discovery workshop – Council executive team

Reactivate Consulting held a workshop in Council Chambers on 6 March 2026, bookended by an LGA site visit and an initial acoustics audit in the town centre. The workshop engaged key members of Council's community, planning, engagement and tourism teams to capture initial reflections on the state of the night-time economy in the Kiama LGA, fundamental elements of the future NTE Strategy, local and national benchmarking, and community engagement considerations. The workshop helped lay the groundwork for the engagement plan and its associated activities, and provided crucial guidance in the development of the strategy.

Online survey

An online survey was developed, consisting of 25 key questions (multiple-choice and open-ended), and was aimed at Kiama's general residential and business communities. The survey took approximately 10 minutes to complete, with the questions divided into four key sections, as follows:

1. About you – gathering respondent demographics
2. The now – exploring Kiama today: what's working & what's not
3. Looking forward – envisioning Kiama's after dark future
4. Doing business in Kiama – asking questions specific to local businesses and venues

The survey link was hosted on Your Say and was promoted online via social media posts, as well as an A6 postcard distributed to and within businesses, and direct emails from Council to local stakeholders. In total, **306** survey responses were received.

A copy of the survey questions can be downloaded here.

Community pop-ups & interactive displays

Two community pop-ups were held at high-traffic locations, facilitated by Council's Tourism and Economic Development Manager and Community Engagement Officer:

- Tuesday, 31 March 2026, at IGA Gerringong
- Wednesday, 1 April 2026, at the Kiama Farmers Market

These events engaged a total of more than 200 community members. The pop-ups featured a variety of interactive activities, including:

- Post-it note boards, allowing each participant to provide feedback and ideas on Kiama's current and future after dark experiences
- Prominent QR code signage encouraging pop-up visitors to complete the online community survey
- Kiama town centre and LGA maps, to lead discussions with pop-up visitors about existing hotspots and possibilities for increased after dark vibrancy within the region
- Ad hoc, one-on-one discussions with pop-up visitors

Business workshop

A dedicated workshop for local businesses was held on 20 April 2026 at The Pavilion Kiama, where representatives from Reactivate Consulting, Council and the Office of the 24-Hour Economy Commissioner were able to provide an overview on plans for the development of the Kiama NTE Strategy and a potential future Special Entertainment Precinct (SEP).

The workshop was attended by 13 local business representatives, and also involved roundtable breakout sessions where attendees were taken through a series of exercises, including:

- the current and future state of Kiama's night-time economy,
- local, national and international benchmarking

- key focus areas,
- success measures and objectives, and
- opportunities, challenges and barriers.

Outcomes from this session showed that Kiama's business community has a clear vision for what a successful night-time economy looks like – drawing on a rich range of local and international reference points – and understands both the opportunities available to them and the barriers standing in the way.

In summary, what businesses are asking for equates to:

- meaningful reform to planning and licensing controls,
- a transport solution that makes Kiama accessible after dark,
- a formal mechanism for business collaboration and coordination, and
- a council that is a genuine partner in activation rather than an obstacle to it.

Council-led business engagement

During May 2026, Council undertook additional engagement in support of the wider business engagement program. This involved reaching out to a further 20+ businesses both within and outside the Kiama town centre who were not able to attend the Business Workshop, to seek additional feedback and widen the field of responses.

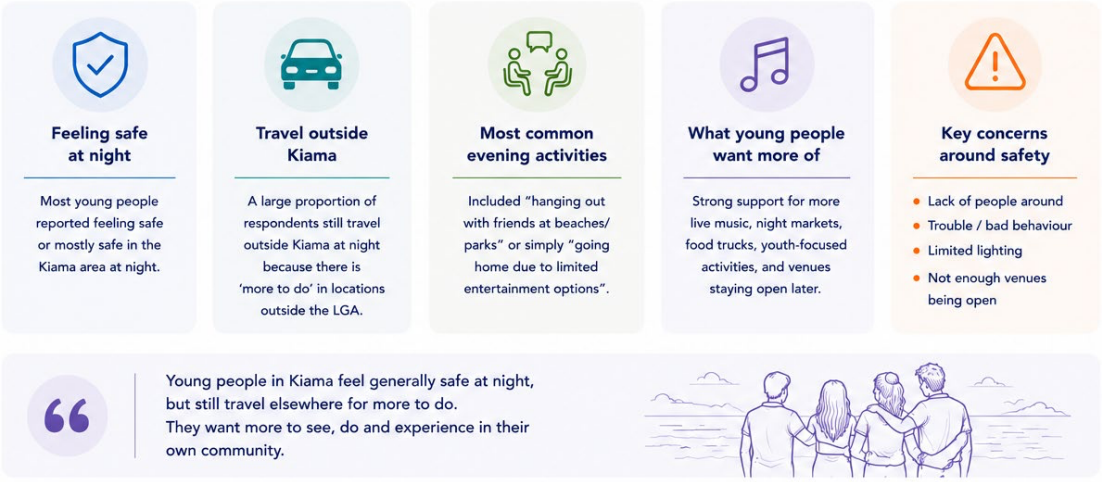
Businesses were approached via email with five key questions, and from the handful of additional responses received, some key insights included:

- a desire to shift Kiama from a day-trip destination to an overnight destination
- transport – particularly at night – is seen as the biggest barrier to after dark participation
- strong support for a more vibrant and diverse night-time economy
- public space activation is seen as a critical element in the success of the night-time economy
- strong support for placemaking and atmosphere improvements
- council plays a key enabling and coordination role
- a need for greater business collaboration, coordination and collective activation, preferably via a central Kiama 'What's On' website with interactive map
- interest in developing distinct precincts and character-based entertainment zones
- nostalgia for Kiama's previous late-night trading culture
- a long-term desire for a connected, walkable, experience-based evening economy

Youth engagement

Council also led a youth engagement activity with students from Kiama High School during May 2026, where a short survey was presented to class members aged 12-18.

From the 67 responses received, key findings and themes included:



State Agency engagement

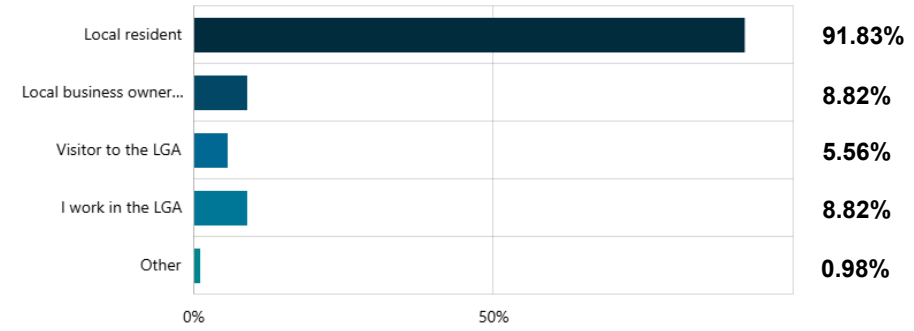
At the time of writing, additional engagement was due to be undertaken with a range of government and local agencies, including NSW Police, Liquor & Gaming NSW, Transport for NSW, the Department of Planning, Housing and Infrastructure, and the Illawarra Shoalhaven Local Area Health District. This engagement seeks to understand the needs, expectations and local insights of these stakeholders with regard to Kiama's night-time economy, as well as the risks and opportunities that could arise from a more vibrant after dark offering across the LGA.

Engagement images

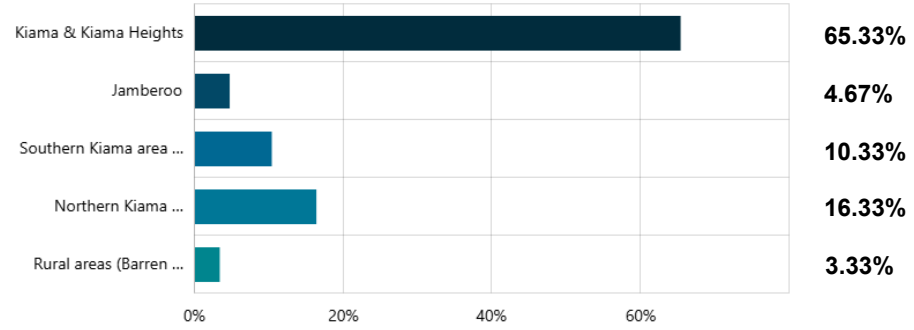
Demographics

The following graphs highlight the demographics of community members who completed the online NTE Survey.

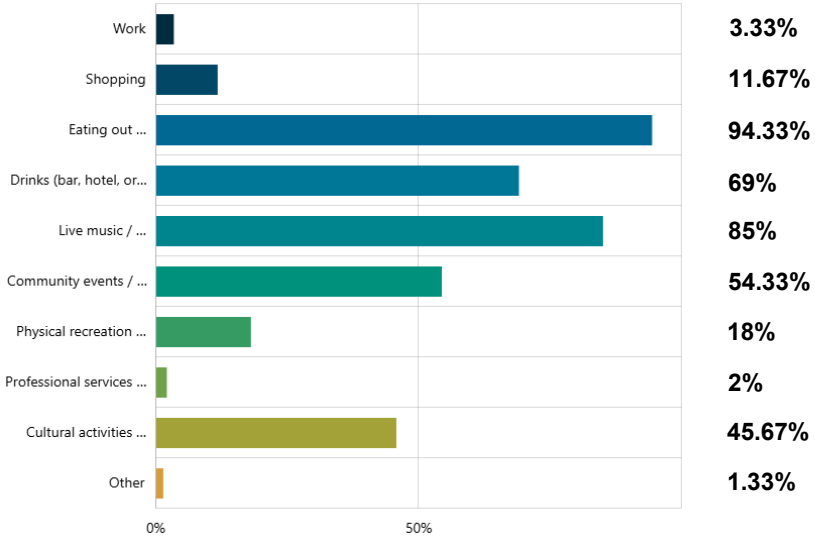
Which of the following best describes you? (multiple selections allowed)



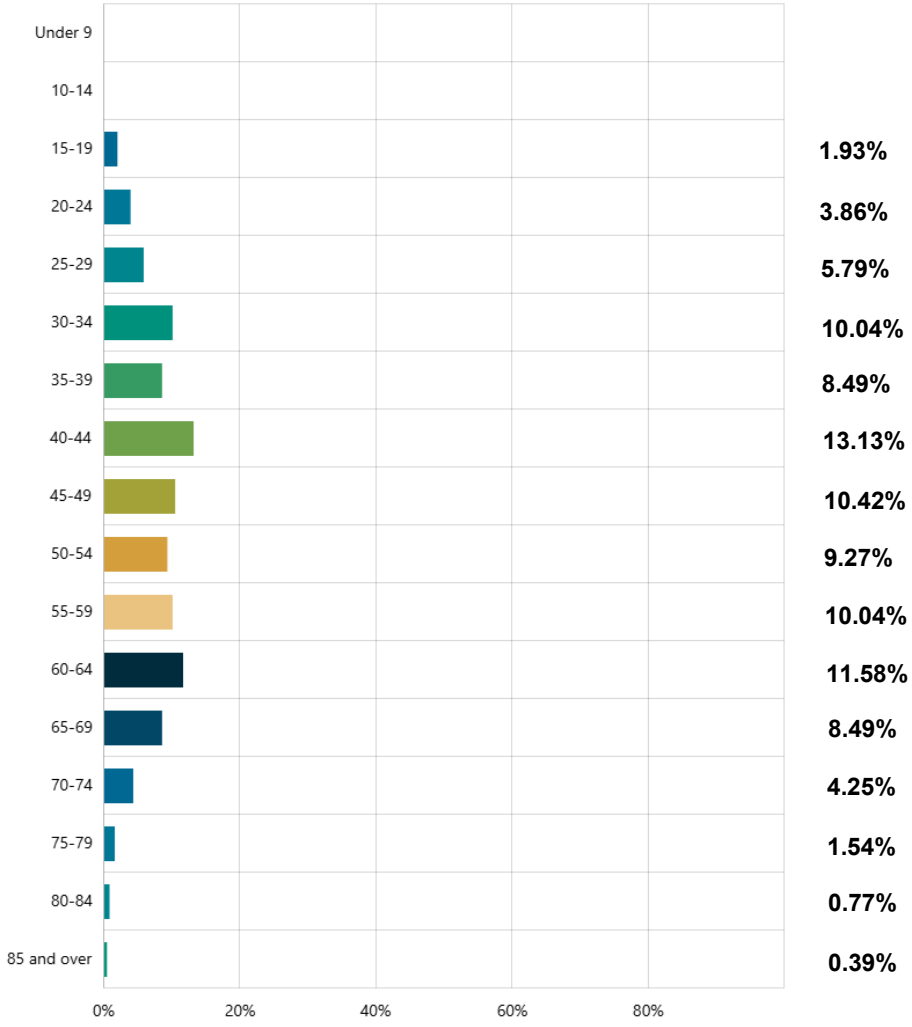
Which village, town, or suburb are you most connected to?



Reasons for going out after dark (multiple selections allowed)



Age group



15-19	1.93%
20-24	3.86%
25-29	5.79%
30-34	10.04%
35-39	8.49%
40-44	13.13%
45-49	10.42%
50-54	9.27%
55-59	10.04%
60-64	11.58%
65-69	8.49%
70-74	4.25%
75-79	1.54%
80-84	0.77%
85 and over	0.39%

Key themes and findings

Overall, Kiama is perceived as a safe and appealing town with strong community pride, however its night-time economy is seen as underdeveloped. Strategic investment in diverse, accessible, and community-focused evening activities will significantly enhance local vibrancy while preserving the town's identity.

Key themes that arose during engagement with the local residential and business community included:

1. **Kiama is perceived as having poor vibrancy**
   Current vibrancy is scored very low, with most respondent ratings falling between 1 and 2 out of 5 and the range of activities on offer seen as limited in variety and appeal.

2. **Barriers create economic leakage**
   Many respondents confirmed they frequently travel outside the area for nightlife when they do seek to go out, with current barriers to engaging in after dark activity within Kiama listed as:
   - Limited availability of after dark entertainment and experiences
   - Lack of access to suitable transport options after dark
   - High cost of going out
   - Family responsibilities

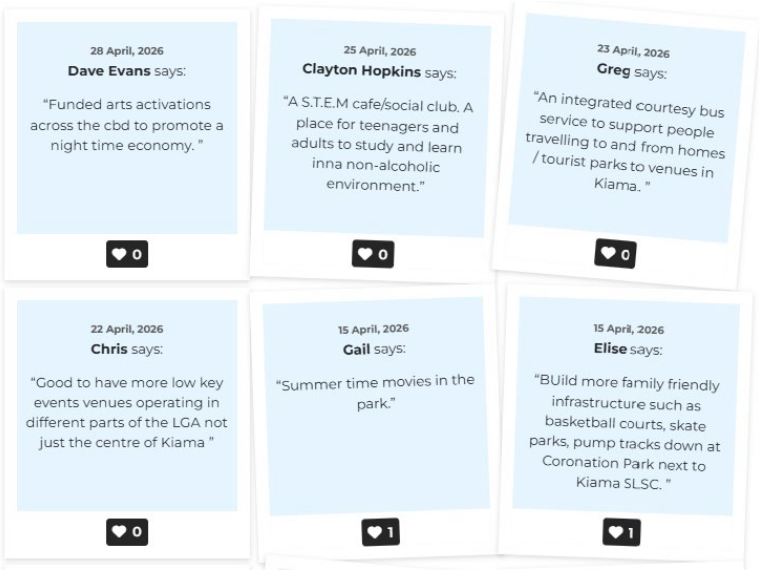
3. **Safety, inclusivity and timing are essential**
   While Kiama is generally perceived as being safe after dark, there were a range of minor improvements requested, predominantly relating to lighting and a visible security or Police presence. That said, the community showed a preference for inclusive, alcohol-free events and activities, with the strongest demand for activations between 3pm and 10pm.

4. **Demand creates opportunity**
   Strong latent demand exists within the community in terms of the desire for more after dark activities, with many respondents confirming they would go out more often if better options existed. Overwhelmingly, community members are seeking:
   - Live music and entertainment
   - Dining and food experiences
   - Markets and outdoor events
   - Arts and cultural programming
   - Later trading hours for venues

The following graphics gives a sense of community sentiment with regard to points 3 and 4 above, specifically in response to the questions:

- *If you could pilot one idea in the next 6–12 months, what would it be? (left graphic)*
- *What would help ensure after dark experiences are safer and more inclusive? (right graphic)*

The following graphic also represents a snapshot of responses to a question prompting visitors to the YourSay website to share their ideas, namely: *What's your suggestion for a better 'after dark' experience in the Kiama area?*



This is further supported by suggestions received in the open-text fields of the NTE Survey, such as:

Conclusion

The engagement undertaken as part of the Kiama Night-Time Economy Strategy demonstrates strong community and business support for a more vibrant, diverse and connected after-dark experience across the municipality. While Kiama is widely recognised as a safe, welcoming and highly valued place to live and visit, consultation findings consistently identified opportunities to strengthen the town's evening economy through greater activation, improved transport, enhanced public spaces, increased cultural and entertainment offerings, and stronger collaboration between Council, businesses and the broader community.

Importantly, feedback highlighted a clear preference for an early-evening economy that is inclusive, family-friendly and community-focused, while also supporting greater opportunities for live music, dining, markets, cultural experiences and extended trading hours. Businesses also expressed a desire for improved coordination, streamlined processes and strategic investment that supports activation and encourages visitors to stay longer and engage more deeply with all that Kiama has to offer.

The consultation findings contained within this report have directly informed the preparation of the Draft Kiama Night-Time Economy Strategy, which will establish a long-term framework for growing the local night-time economy in a manner that reflects Kiama's unique character, values and aspirations.

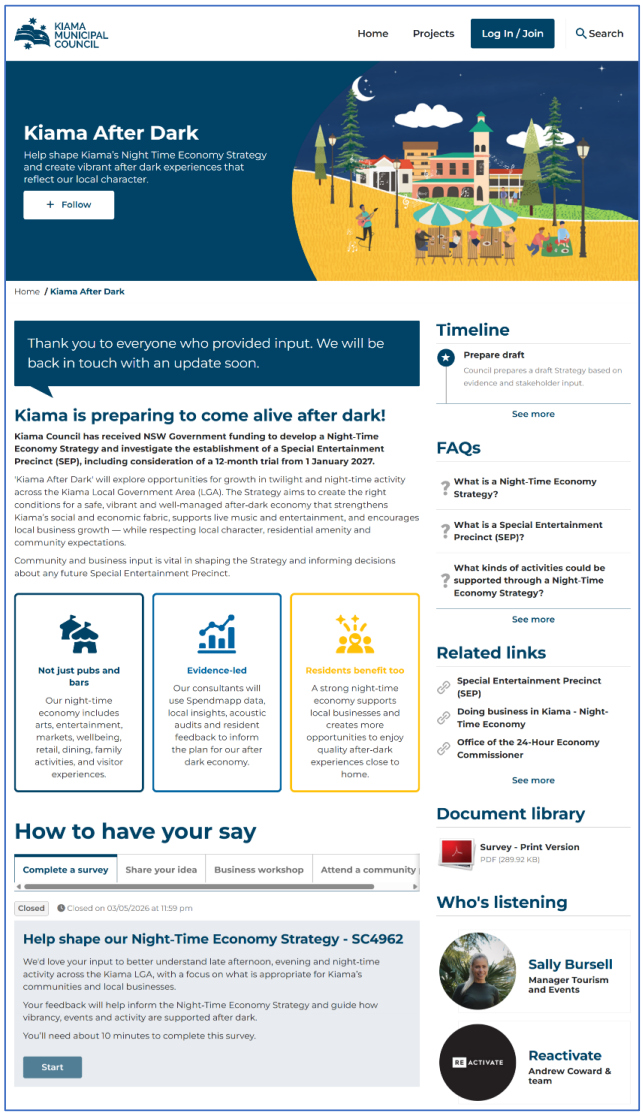
As part of this broader program of work, Council will also continue to explore the feasibility and potential implementation of a Special Entertainment Precinct (SEP) within the Kiama CBD. Community and stakeholder engagement – with businesses, residents and government agencies – regarding a potential SEP will be the next step following development of the NTE Strategy. Detailed technical investigations, collaboration, and formal community consultation would be undertaken during the second half of 2026, including consideration of precinct boundaries, operating frameworks, transport, safety, acoustic management and place activation opportunities, before the potential commencement of a SEP trial in early 2027.

In conclusion, this consultation process has provided a strong foundation for the next phase of planning and has reinforced a shared vision for a safer, more vibrant and more engaging Kiama after dark – one that supports local businesses, enhances community wellbeing and strengthens Kiama's reputation as both a travel destination and a place to live.

Appendices

NTE Survey – Postcard/flyer
[distributed at Council pop-ups, business workshops, local business and community pop-up]

NTE Survey – Poster

NTE Survey – Social Post

Webpage