KIAMA MUNICIPAL COUNCIL
your council, your community

Public Exhibition Engagement Report

Draft Delivery Program & Operational Plan, Fees & Charges and Budget

Kiama Municipal Council (KMC) invited the community to review and provide feedback on its draft Delivery Program and Operational Plan (DPOP), Fees and Charges, Budget, and Revenue Policy (statement).

This report summarises the engagement activities undertaken and the feedback received during the exhibition period.

Background

Together, these Integrated Planning & Reporting (IP&R) documents explain how Council is proposing to deliver services, manage assets and work towards long-term financial sustainability over the coming financial year.

These plans guide what Council will focus on, what projects and services will be delivered and how available resources will be allocated.

Kiama Council continues working to improve its financial position and meet the requirements of an NSW Government Performance Improvement Order (PIO). During the exhibition period it was announced that the Minister of Local Government intended to issue an amended PIO that amongst other requirements will require Council to return to a balanced operating budget by the end of the 2027-28 financial year (rather than the end of 2026-27 financial year requirement of the current PIO). While this extension to deliver a balanced budget provides Council with more time to meet a balanced budget, we still need to commence the 2026-27 financial year with an adopted budget that enables us to achieve this requirement.

At an Extraordinary Meeting in April 2026, Council adopted budget parameters that informed this draft budget. These parameters focused on:

- Reducing costs and reviewing service levels
- Prioritising essential services and assets
- Improving long-term financial sustainability
- Addressing significant asset and maintenance challenges, including at Blue Haven Terralong

The recently announced intention of the Minister for Local Government to issue a new PIO, happily means that Council will retain all our current services to the community instead of needing to adopt any of the proposed reductions in the budget parameters.

Despite the amended PIO and the impact on documents moving forward, exhibition provided the community with an opportunity to understand the challenges that Council face, review the proposed approaches and share feedback before the plans are finalised at the June 30 extraordinary Council Meeting. This feedback remains important as Council navigates the amended PIO and the need to meet the requirement of the new PIO.

Public exhibition period

24 April - 24 May 2026 inclusive.

Promotional activities

Dedicated Your Say Page | Media release | Monthly newsletter (589 opens) | Social Media posts (6k+ reach) | Included in The Bugle newspaper double spread | Visit to Kiama High School |

How community got involved

7500+
aware via the Bugle Newspaper

1,392
website visitors

70+
pop-up participants

47
online feedback form responses

12
Councillor workshop participants

74
total submissions received

What we heard

In the lead up to the exhibition of the suite of draft documents Council held an Extraordinary Council Meeting at which a Budget Parameters Report, outlining a number of possible budget scenarios was adopted by Council. Within this report a scenario presented in order for KMC to adopt a balanced budget included the reduction or cessation of some Council run services.

The draft budget placed on exhibition was not a 'balanced budget', it was a budget with a deficit bottom line that allowed for the continuation of services mentioned in the Budget Parameters Report.

In the interests of transparency and ensuring community members could easily identify Operational Plan deliverables that may have been impacted by potential service cuts, the draft DPOP highlighted activity that could potentially be reduced or ceased to meet a balanced budget if necessary. All proposed deliverables related to these services were included in the draft DPOP, although highlighted.

As such it is worth noting that significant feedback received through the exhibition of the draft suite of documents was related to potential changes to the draft documents that may have occurred, rather than strictly relating to the documents as presented. Councillors have been made aware of submissions and community sentiment in relation to any proposed changes to services.

We heard:

- onsite van owners were not happy with the draft Fees and Charges which included a raise in fees for holiday parks.
- format of documents and the clarity and transparency of information included in documents could be improved.
- community want transparent information sharing about the unsolicited proposals received in relation to our Holiday Parks.
- community desire decisions related to the leasing or sale of any Council assets, especially those with the potential for ongoing revenue generation, to be made with consideration to the long term view for our LGA, rather than as a short-term fix to the current financial pressures Council faces.

Outcome

Beyond making some formatting changes to the documents to reduce duplication of information and the overall look of the document, there are very few recommended changes based on submissions received. It should be noted that the DPOP is by its nature a detailed document that outlines what Council aims to achieve in the upcoming financial year, it is also focused on output measures for the deliverables of the operational plan. These one year deliverables and outputs contribute to the achievement of the activities of the Delivery Program which are delivered over a four year period.

Many submissions received related to the reduction or cessation of services (youth, library, community and cultural). While service reductions were included in the budget parameters report adopted by Council in April, the budget ultimately exhibited did not include these the reductions, as such changes to the budget are not required. Likewise, while the DPOP included highlighted deliverables and sections related to possible service reductions, the only change required is to remove this highlighting as the deliverables will remain in the final document.

A number of submissions were also received opposing the increase in fees and charges related to Holiday Parks. While Council acknowledges the concerns raised the proposed fees remain appropriate and are considered reasonable, particularly as Council's charges for comparable holiday park assets are still well below those of neighbouring councils. The current pricing structure supports the ongoing maintenance, regulatory compliance and long-term sustainability of the Holiday Parks, and therefore no changes to fees are considered necessary at this time.

With regards to the submissions and feedback about the Holiday Parks unsolicited proposals - there is a separate documented procedure for how unsolicited proposals are managed by Council that it outside the scope of the DPOP and Budget. As such this feedback has been shared with Councillors for their information as this process is undertaken.

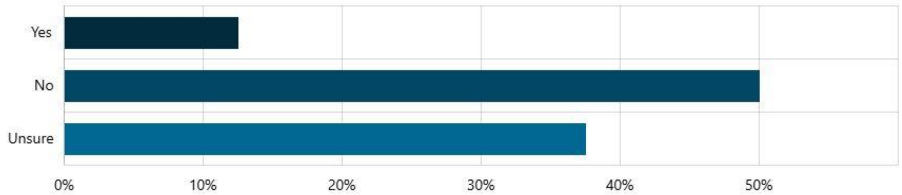
What's next

Councillors have been provided with access to all submissions, a summary report (feedback themed where multiple submissions of the same nature or topic) of submissions received, along with recommendations and commentary from Council staff who are subject matter experts on the topic to assist with their consideration of the final suite of documents.

Final documents will be presented to Councillors at an extraordinary meeting of Council on Tuesday 30 June 2026.

Summary of Feedback Form responses

In general, do you support the proposed documents that guide Council's priorities, budget and long term resourcing?



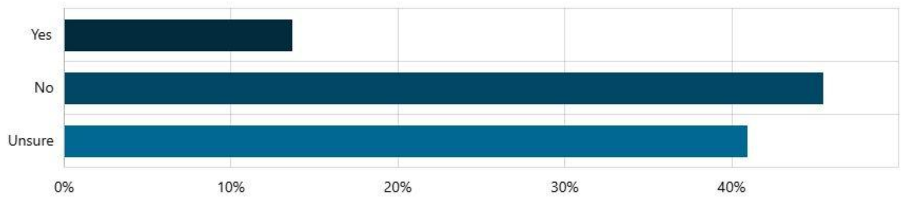
What is the reason for your answer above?

Who do you think will be most affected by these changes, and why?

What impacts (or risks) concern you most if services are reduced, either now or in the future?

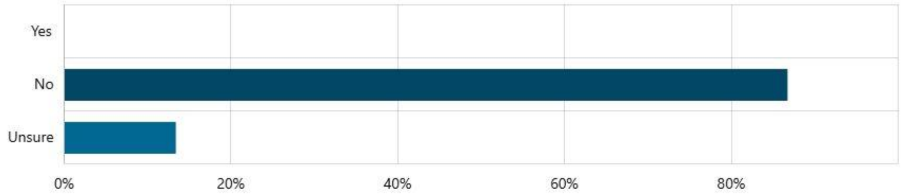
What could help reduce negative impacts or help the community adapt to change?

In general do you support the draft Delivery Program and Operational Plan?



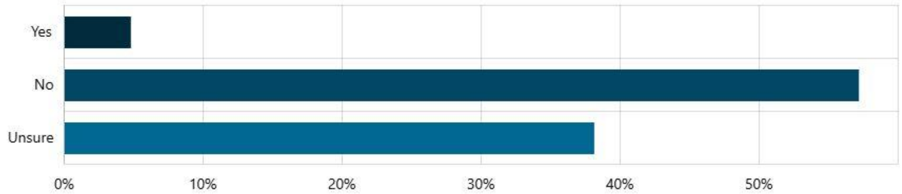
What is the reason for your answer above?

In general so you support the draft fees and charges?



What is the reason for your answer above?

In general, do you support the draft Budget?



What is the reason for your answer above?

Summary table of submissions received and staff responses

Feedback received	Response	Recommendation
During the exhibition period Council received fourteen (14) submissions in opposition to the proposed increase to Holiday Parks Fees and Charges.	Council acknowledges the concerns raised regarding compliance processes, fairness and legacy site arrangements; however, these matters relate to operational and regulatory management of the Holiday Park rather than the Fees and Charges document. The proposed fees remain appropriate and are considered reasonable, particularly as Council's charges for comparable holiday park assets are still well below those of neighbouring councils. The current pricing structure supports the ongoing maintenance, regulatory compliance and long-term sustainability of the Holiday Park, and therefore no changes to fees are considered necessary at this time.	No amendment to the Draft Fees and Charges is recommended.
Thirteen (13) submissions expressed opposition to the cessation or reduction of SENTRAL and youth services.	While the budget on exhibition does not implement service reductions originally flagged as part of the budget parameters paper, it is worth Council being aware of community sentiment on this issue.	No change recommended as the budget on exhibition does not implement service reduction.
During the exhibition period Council received thirteen (13) submissions in opposition to reduction of library services.	While the budget on exhibition does not implement service reductions originally flagged as part of the budget parameters paper, it is worth Council being aware of community sentiment on this issue.	No change recommended as the budget on exhibition does not implement service reduction.
Twelve (12) submissions were in opposition to cuts to funding to cultural services, the arts and First Nations programs, services and events.	While the budget on exhibition does not implement service and funding reductions originally flagged as part of the budget parameters paper, it is worth Council being aware of community sentiment on this issue.	No change recommended as the budget on exhibition does not implement service reduction.
Ten (10) submissions expressed opposition to cessation or reduction of tourism and events services for the LGA.	While the budget on exhibition does not implement service reductions originally flagged as part of the budget parameters paper, it is worth Council being aware of community sentiment on this issue.	No change recommended as the budget on exhibition does not implement service reduction.
Council received nine (9) submission in opposition to the reduction of cessation of Community Services.	While the budget on exhibition does not implement service reductions originally flagged as part of the budget parameters paper, it is worth Council being aware of community sentiment on this issue.	No change recommended as the budget on exhibition does not implement service reduction.
Eight (8) submissions indicated dissatisfaction with the format of documents.	Council's current suite of documents are compliant with the requirements of the Office of Local Government IP&R Framework Guidelines. We are working on the format and refinement of these documents to make them more 'reader friendly' however this is	Some changes to the format of the final DPOP are being implemented in response to this feedback.

	process that will be occurring over the next 12 -24 months.	
Six (6) submissions received expressed a need for more transparency/clarity of information in documents.	Agreed	Updates to improve clarity, transparency and relevance of information presented.
Council received five (5) submissions about the recent unsolicited proposal in regards to Holiday Parks and a strong desire that no rushed decisions be made, long terms security be prioritised over short term fixes and community be consulted in regards to leasing arrangements.	Unsolicited holiday parks proposals will be addressed in accordance with the Unsolicited Proposals policy, but it is worth Council being aware of community sentiment on this issue.	The unsolicited proposals do not form part of these documents at this time and as such no changes recommended.
Council received four (4) submissions opposing increased rates or an SRV – reasons for opposition were based on affordability and perceived lack of increase in service levels to justify increases in cost.	An increase in rates included as a sensitivity scenario but was not part of exhibited budget. The reasons behind the financial position for Council are well documented, leading to the imposition of the PIO. The current KMC management team have implemented significant improvements in financial management and controls, also well documented in the budget submission papers. More work needs to be done to attain a balanced budget, and the proposed variation (extension) to the PIO will provide more opportunity to do this sustainably.	No change recommended.
During the exhibition period Council received four (4) submissions requesting an extension of the 28-day exhibition period given the notice of the Minister of Local Government's intention to issue an amended PIO.	The Office of Local Government Integrated Planning and Reporting Guidelines require Council's ensure following: - Documents must be exhibited for a period of at least 28 days and submissions received by the council must be considered by the council before the Delivery Program is adopted by the council. - Council must have an Operational Plan that is adopted before the beginning of each financial year (must be adopted not later than June 30). With an extraordinary meeting scheduled for 30 June and papers for this meeting being released 24 June, the internal deadline for the finalised documents is 19 June. Between the close of exhibition at midnight 24 May and 19 June (nineteen business days) the following must be undertaken: - Submissions and engagement report collated to allow Councillor consideration of submissions before adoption of final documents	No change recommended as this would breach Council's legislated obligations.

	- Any required amendments to documents made, including both content changes and document layout and design changes - Collation of all components into single document - Review by Executive, and any requested amendments made (content and design) - Proofing of final documents and any required amendments made - Development of Council Report to accompany document suite. Council are meeting the legislated requirements in regards to public exhibition of these documents, and the above timing also ensures we will meet requirements to adoption deadlines and providing public access to documents ahead of the June 30 meeting. Additionally, an extended or amended PIO does not negate the obligation of Council meet the above requirements, and the notice by the Minister is not envisaged to significantly change the exhibited documents as the budget and DPOP reflected a deficit rather than balanced budget (as required by existing PIO).	
During the exhibition period Council received four (4) submissions in regards to Blue Haven Terralong, the ongoing plans for this asset and some dissatisfaction with the cost to the community of this facility.	The Asset Condition Report for Terralong contains capital upgrade costs of $35M over 10 years. This has been included in the Long Term Financial Plan (LTFP). Council has resolved that this Report be reviewed but at this stage the cost is included over the 10 years. More critically and short term is building and fire safety compliance work under the Fire Safety Order issued to Council that has been included at a cost of $10M over the next 3 years. More typical costs related to unit refurbishment is also included. At this stage, current unit vacancies and upcoming new resident admissions will form the substantive offset to these costs.	No changes to documents recommended.

In addition to the above, we also received submissions that addressed the following areas:

- Sporting organisations opposed to the changes to sporting grounds fees and charges
- Sporting organisations seeking sponsorship
- Sporting organisations raising concerns about condition facilities (tennis courts)
- Housing affordability and catalyst sites

Summary of what we heard at Community Pop-Ups

During the exhibition period, staff attended three community pop-up events in Kiama (farmers market), Gerringong (IGA) and Jamberoo (IGA). Community Pop-up are defined times and spaces where council staff are available exclusively for members of the community to engage with and share their opinions, concerns and seek further information on matters of intertest or importance to them. At the pop-up events held during this exhibition period. staff engaged with community members, answered their questions and encouraged them to share their thoughts on what is important to them in relation to the draft DPOP, Budget and Fees and Charges. Below is a summary of this feedback:

Community priorities

- Open spaces, natural beauty and maintaining the ‘village feel’ were consistently identified as important.
- Key community assets included libraries, leisure facilities and community events.
- Strong interest in better use and activation of open spaces to support community and economic outcomes.

Maintenance and amenity

- Ongoing concerns about litter in high-use areas, including the harbour and Hindmarsh Park.
- Feedback highlighted the importance of clean public amenities.
- Requests for improved mowing and maintenance of open spaces, walkways and coastal access points.

Planning, development and local character

- Concerns raised about overdevelopment and non-complying development.
- Strong sentiment to protect local character, including limiting building heights.
- Interest in advocacy to State Government on planning controls.
- Support for sustainable and environmentally mindful development.
- Short-term rental accommodation and the impact on local residents of large groups staying is STRA properties.

Community services and support

- Youth services identified as a key priority, including mental health and suicide prevention.
- Importance placed on funding support for community groups, including grants programs.
- Recognition of the role of services and programs in supporting community connection.

Infrastructure, access and tourism

- Parking and traffic management identified as ongoing challenges.
- Concerns about the impacts of tourism in high-traffic areas.
- Need to balance visitor economy with local amenity.
- Feedback on Short Term Rental Accommodation, specifically those accommodating large groups and impact this has on local residents.
- Feedback on specific infrastructure issues, including Jamberoo dog park design and size.

Financial sustainability and asset management

- Interest in Council’s approach to asset management, including retaining income-generating assets.

- Feedback on fees and charges, particularly for holiday parks.
- Importance of financial sustainability in service delivery.

Feedback from these pop-up events while not resulting in specific document changes (noting feedback relating to continuation of services did not necessitate document changes) has been shared with Councillors along with submission feedback to ensure awareness of community sentiment.