

19 QUESTIONS WITH NOTICE

19.1 Question with notice: Councillor Warren - Mulching versus mowing

Councillor Erica Warren has submitted the following question with notice for consideration:

Question

I request that Council please provide a map of our municipality, where Kiama Council mows lawns, not including sporting fields? Additionally, the mowing schedule for the area's listed on the map.

Councillor information provided

Background

Landcare has suggested in the recent past that if Council worked more closely with Landcare, there could be an opportunity to mulch versus mow. This could provide some significant savings to Kiama Council, along with opening up our valued resources (Outdoor team) to spend more time mowing areas that need mowing on a more consistent basis.

Chief Executive Officer response

In response to the questions raised, it is advised that there no maps available that show all areas that Council currently mows and maintains. Council's GIS mapping staff member is in the process of developing a map. This work is being done in and around existing priorities, noting it is a time consuming and detailed process. Once complete this can be tabled with council in a future report.

A list of all current mowing locations has been included in the attachment, divided into the operational area of each team.

This mowing schedule outlines the programmed maintenance of coastal reserves, rural roads, municipal parks, cemetery grounds and bushland areas across the municipality. Work is allocated across several crews, each with defined service areas, equipment and operational responsibilities.

The crews are small teams, with a wide range of duties (not just mowing) and community demand for services at a higher level (ie more frequent mowing) is a constant and frequent complaint to council. It is also important to understand that team members work year-round, but are required and entitled to appropriate leave (planned or unplanned), training etc. Tasks can be impacted by absences or leave, and this is part of managing a diverse and complex workload.

The program prioritizes routine mowing, but also includes other tasks such as roadside vegetation management, reserve presentation and seasonal tasks such as pruning, spraying and storm clean up. Most scheduled mowing is completed on a four to six week cycle. Mow cycles are understandably, subject to weather, service priorities and site conditions, although this is shorter in highly visible public areas that require regular presentation, safety checks and responsive maintenance.

Questions with notice

19.1 Question with notice: Councillor Warren - Mulching versus mowing (cont)

In addition to programmed work, the parks teams respond to customer requests, prepare reserves for booked activities and events and undertake clean-up works after / and before wind, and storm / flood events. This report does not include the maintenance activities on sports fields however it must be noted that Council still maintains the curtilages around the sports fields.

As an operational matter, Council undertakes ongoing reviews of its parks and reserves maintenance to balance its delivery priorities against the capacity of the staff resources available. During cooler periods, Council resources undertake maintenance, pruning, planting and mulching, while in the warmer seasons, the predominant focus is on regular mowing.

Council is willing to work with Landcare groups to identify potential areas for mulching, however it must be noted that these mulched areas will often require ongoing weed management which is much more labour intensive than broad area mowing. This labour requirement may also be more than Landcare's volunteer base to accommodate.

Attachments

Nil

Enclosures

- 1 Mowing schedule 2026⇒

Item 19.1

19.2 Question with notice: Councillor Lawton - Progress of Stage 2 Kiama Coastal Walk, funding opportunities and land management requirements

Councillor Melinda Lawton has submitted the following question with notice for consideration:

Question

Can the Chief Executive Officer please provide an update on the progress of investigations and planning for the proposed Stage 2 extension of the Kiama Coastal Walk between the Werri Beach / Werri Lagoon and Black Head Reserve Gerroa, including:

1. What actions have been undertaken to investigate and progress the land access requirements necessary to establish a continuous public walking corridor between Werri Lagoon and Black Head Reserve?
2. Has Council commenced, or does it intend to commence, a cadastral and land ownership survey to identify all private, Crown and public land parcels required for the proposed route and, if so, what is the anticipated timeframe for completion?
3. Has Council assessed the suitability of the NSW Coastal Lands Protection Scheme as a mechanism to secure land required for public access and completion of this section of the Coastal Walk? The Scheme exists to bring significant coastal land into public ownership to improve public access, protect scenic coastal values and conserve important ecological sites.
4. Has Council had any discussions, lodged any nominations, undertaken any preliminary assessments, or otherwise engaged with the NSW Department of Planning, Housing and Infrastructure regarding the potential use of the Coastal Lands Protection Scheme for land required along the proposed route? The Scheme is administered by the Department of Planning, Housing and Infrastructure and provides for the acquisition of land from willing landowners at fair market value for public purposes.
5. Were any land acquisitions, easements, licences or public access arrangements associated with the existing Kiama Coastal Walk facilitated through the NSW Coastal Lands Protection Scheme or similar State Government programs and, if so, what lessons or precedents may assist in progressing Stage 2?
6. What is the status of any current or proposed funding applications to Active Transport NSW or other State and Commonwealth funding programs relevant to the planning, land acquisition, design or construction of this section of the Coastal Walk?
7. Have any meetings, briefings, representations or written correspondence occurred with local Members of Parliament, Ministers, Ministerial offices or NSW Government agencies regarding:
 - the progression of Stage 2 of the Kiama Coastal Walk
 - land acquisition or public access opportunities
 - funding opportunities

Questions with notice

19.2 Question with notice: Councillor Lawton - Progress of Stage 2 Kiama Coastal Walk, funding opportunities and land management requirements (cont)

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- the NSW Coastal Lands Protection Scheme?

If so, please provide details of the dates, parties involved and any outcomes, commitments or actions arising from those discussions.

Councillor information providedBackground

Completion of the Kiama Coastal Walk between Werri Beach/Werri Lagoon and Black Head Reserve remains a significant public access, tourism and active transport opportunity for the Municipality.

A detailed land ownership and cadastral survey is a critical first step in identifying the land corridor required to deliver the project and assessing opportunities to secure public access through the NSW Coastal Lands Protection Scheme.

The Scheme was established to bring significant coastal land into public ownership for public access, scenic protection and environmental conservation, making it a potentially important mechanism for progressing this long-standing community asset.

Chief Executive Officer response

In response to the questions submitted, the following is information related to each of the items:

1. Council resolved in August 2025 to include the extension of the Coastal Walk between Gerringong and Gerroa into the State Government Advocacy document. Council has sent correspondence to the Member of Kiama (see Attachment) and the Mayor and CEO met with NSW Minister for Small Business, Lands and Property, Multiculturalism, Sport, Jobs, and Tourism on 28 July 2026 to further advocate for State government assistance in progressing the cadastral boundary surveying of the preferred route for future acquisition. To date there has been no responses.
2. Council do not currently have the in-house capacity to undertake the surveying work required for the coastal walk. The engagement of external surveying consultants will be required, however there is currently no adopted budget in FY2026-27 for this work, and there are no resources (human or financial) for surveys or costings at this point. Item 2.1 of the 2026-27 Operational Plan lists the following action:

Subject to available grant funding, consult with landowners and undertake preliminary works to enable progression of the extension of the Coastal Walking track between Gerringong and Gerroa.

Council will continue to investigate grant funding opportunities as they arise and should this be successful a timeframe will be developed for this work.

Council has conveyed this advice to the Local State Government Member Katelin McInerney and to the Hon Minister Stephen Kamper, Minister for Lands and Property, Minister for Multiculturalism, Minister for Sport, Minister for Jobs and Tourism. The CEO requested that the State Government undertake the surveying work required.

Questions with notice

19.2 Question with notice: Councillor Lawton - Progress of Stage 2 Kiama Coastal Walk, funding opportunities and land management requirements (cont)

3. Under the Coastal Land Protection Scheme (CLPS), nominated land that meets the scheme's eligibility criteria is negotiated and acquired by the State Government and subsequently transferred into Council's ownership at no cost. Previous assessments have found the coastal walk would qualify under the CLPS and was the mechanism used in the creation of the previous stage from Kiama to Werri Beach.
4. As noted in 2. above, there are no resources to progress this project without external funding. Subsequently there has been no discussions with the NSW Department of Planning, Housing and Infrastructure at this stage. Advocacy work on this item has been facilitated and delivered by the CEO and the Mayor in line with Council's adopted advocacy plan.
5. The acquisition of land for the creation of the existing Coastal Walk between Kiama to Werri Beach, was facilitated through the CLPS. The CLPS is only related to acquisition of the land that is subsequent transferred to Council for ongoing management.
6. The commonwealth government's Active Transport Fund (ATF) is currently open for submissions, however a review of the grant conditions indicate this project would not be eligible. The ATF only funds construction projects, or design and construct projects. The guidelines exclude funding for approval costs, including fees and charges for planning, environmental, cultural and heritage and all other similar costs associated with pre-development approval, which would incorporate the surveying. Similarly the NSW Get Active program has in the past prioritised funding for creation of walking and cycleway pathways that provides a direct link between destinations and places caps on the number and value of submissions per organisation. This grant fund is expected open in the next few months and Council will review and apply if eligible.
7. As advised in 1. above. The Mayor and CEO met on a regular basis with the State Member for Kiama and have on all occasions discussed this issue. The Mayor and CEO also meet directly with the Minister Kamper noted above on the 28 July 2026 to discuss this item amongst other relevant matters. The Mayor has also recently met with shadow Treasurer and liberal party candidate for Kiama Serena Copley on 31 July 2026. This item is adopted advocacy item and all conversations held with any parties, governments or departments will always reflect the adopted position of Council.

Attachments

Nil

Enclosures

- 1 Katelin McInerney Kiama Coastal Walk - Stage 2 Extension ➡

19.3 Question with notice: Councillor Lawton - Investigation of modular erosion control technologies

Councillor Melinda Lawton has submitted the following question with notice for consideration:

Question

1. Are Council staff aware of any opportunities to access site inspections and technical advice relating to modular erosion control solutions at no cost to Council?
2. If so, have these opportunities been considered or utilised for priority erosion sites, including the eastern and western foreshores of the Minnamurra River?
3. Can staff provide advice on the suitability, effectiveness and whole-of-life cost of modular erosion control technologies compared with traditional engineered solutions?
4. Have staff considered a staged or progressive approach to delivering erosion management works as funding becomes available? If so, what grant funding programs, or other funding opportunities have been identified?
5. Staff have previously advised that the design for erosion management works at the Minnamurra River site is being finalised. Can staff provide an update on the anticipated timeframe for completion of the design and outline the next steps required to progress the project to implementation in detail?

Councillor information providedBackground

Council continues to experience significant erosion impacts along sections of the Minnamurra River, particularly on both the eastern and western riverbanks. Several locations have experienced ongoing deterioration, creating risks to public assets, environmental values, public safety and recreational access.

In some high-risk areas, sections have required temporary closure or other management measures while more permanent solutions are investigated. Many of these locations have remained on Council's works and funding priorities for an extended period due to the significant cost associated with traditional engineering and bank stabilisation projects.

While comprehensive design solutions remain important, the funding, design, assessment and construction processes can often take many years before works are delivered.

There may be opportunities to utilise emerging and proven erosion control technologies that allow works to be implemented progressively, reducing ongoing loss of riverbank and associated assets while longer-term solutions continue to be planned. Various modular systems have been used for erosion protection, scour control and riverbank stabilisation in Australia and internationally. Such systems are designed to be deployed in stages and may present a more affordable pathway for grant-funded projects and incremental asset protection. Some rock bag and filter-unit systems have

Questions with notice

19.3 Question with notice: Councillor Lawton - Investigation of modular erosion control technologies (cont)

been promoted as erosion and scour protection technologies with a history of use in infrastructure and river management projects.

Investigating a range of available technologies would allow Council to better understand alternative approaches that may complement existing engineering strategies and potentially deliver more immediate outcomes at priority sites.

Chief Executive Officer response

Council staff are encouraged to keep abreast of new technologies as part of ongoing training and professional development. The use of these types of erosion control measures have been in existence for many years and Council's Infrastructure & Operations staff are aware of these products and their potential uses. Many of these products are suitable only as temporary measures and incur costs in their initial implementation and subsequent removal to facilitate permanent solutions. These temporary measures may also not address the community's expectations regarding remediation works.

Council are currently reviewing quotations for the design of the Minnamurra River bank stabilisation project. As part of this project the selected consultant will undertake a review of potential remediation options to provide cost-effective environmentally sustainable permanent solutions that can be implemented in a staged approach or in their entirety dependent on the funding availability. It is at this stage that potential alternate solutions and/or providers can be investigated and compared for suitability and cost.

Staff are aware of several providers who attended the Australian Local Government Association Conference showcasing products that could be suitable. Staff remain willing to invite any suppliers to attend the site, at their own cost in order to consider the suitability of their product for any intended works.

In terms of grant applications, Council are constantly reviewing upcoming grant funding opportunities and will make applications for this and other potential projects across the LGA where eligible. Unfortunately, recent grant announcements had conditions which made the Minnamurra rock wall works ineligible to apply for at this time mainly due to the requirement of having a 'shovel ready' project. It is anticipated that the completion of the above design project will address this limitation for future grants

Item 19.3

19.4 Question with notice: Councillor Lawton - Investigation of temporary and deployable flood barrier systems for flood-prone community assets

Councillor Melinda Lawton has submitted the following question with notice for consideration:

Question

1. Are Council staff aware of opportunities to obtain site inspections and technical advice relating to temporary and deployable flood barrier systems at no cost to council? If so, has this opportunity been considered or utilised for flood-prone community infrastructure and assets across the Municipality?
2. Can staff provide advice on the suitability, effectiveness and cost of freestanding modular flood barrier systems compared with traditional temporary flood response measures?
3. What grant funding programs, external partnership opportunities are available to support the acquisition, trial or evaluation of temporary flood barrier systems as an interim measure while the longer-term flood mitigation works continue to be planned, funded and delivered?

Councillor information providedBackground

While Council continues to investigate and advocate for permanent flood mitigation solutions, the reality is that the planning, funding, design and construction of major infrastructure works can take many years to deliver.

In the meantime, flooding events continue to result in disruption, stress and uncertainty for the community while also contributing to infrastructure damage and significant maintenance and repair costs.

Advances in flood mitigation technology have seen the development of modular flood barrier systems that can be rapidly deployed before flooding occurs and removed when the threat has passed. These systems are designed to create temporary flood walls without the need for large volumes of sandbags and can be reused multiple times. Some systems utilise the weight and force of the floodwater itself to improve stability and effectiveness during flood events.

Given the ongoing impacts being experienced within our local government area, Council should investigate whether such technologies could provide an effective interim solution to reduce risk while longer-term flood protection measures continue to be pursued.

Chief Executive Officer response

Staff are aware of several providers who attended the Australian Local Government Association Conference showcasing products that could be suitable. Staff remain willing to invite any suppliers to attend the site, at their own cost in order to consider the suitability of their product for any intended works.

Questions with notice

19.4 Question with notice: Councillor Lawton - Investigation of temporary and deployable flood barrier systems for flood-prone community assets (cont)

Council's Infrastructure & Operations staff are aware of these temporary flood barriers systems and have been in contact with the product suppliers to determine the cost of their purchase and suitability for deployment at critical assets. This will enable a comparison to be undertaken with traditional protection measures such as sandbagging, to assess their speed, effectiveness and cost for installation and removal. Depending on the ease of installation, this may also allow lessees of Council properties to deploy these temporary barriers themselves to expedite the process.

In terms of grant applications, Council are constantly reviewing upcoming grant funding opportunities and will make applications for this project where eligible.

Item 19.4

19.5 Question with notice: Councillor Matters - Revenue opportunities for Council

Councillor Melissa Matters has submitted the following question with notice for consideration:

Question

Can the Chief Executive Officer advise what are Kiama Municipal Council's current revenue sources and what opportunities are there for additional and/or increased revenue activities?

Councillor information providedBackground

As the community understands, Council is under a State Government imposed Performance Improvement Order (PIO) which requires Kiama Municipal Council (KMC) to explore revenue raising opportunities. The PIO requires this work to be finalised by 20 October 2026. It is urgent for the Councillor group, and the broader community, to partner with the organisation to explore and review all options for revenue improvement.

I would like to understand what work has been done by staff to date to identify opportunities for revenue improvement, including but not limited to:

- review of all fees and charges
- review of current and future leasing and licence arrangement for Council owned and managed assets, including public land
- review of planning instruments to increase and diversify rate base
- Joint Venture opportunities associated with Council's catalyst sites.

Given current cost of living pressures applying for a Special Rate Variation may not be palatable to the broader public. Accordingly, I would like to understand how council is thinking of creating ways to generate alternative sources of income and to maximise what assets we have.

Chief Executive Officer response

Council's adopted 2026-27 budget outlines that Council will generate approximately \$70.6 million in 2026-27. Council currently derives this revenue from four main sources:

- Rates, levies and annual charges – 40%
- User charges and fees – 26%
- Grants and contributions – 15%
- Interest and investment – 2%

Questions with notice

19.5 Question with notice: Councillor Matters - Revenue opportunities for Council (cont)

Rates, levies and annual charges are Council's largest source of revenue. This includes revenue from domestic waste and stormwater levies. Council's ability to increase its rates revenue are limited by two (2) main factors; limited ratepayer growth and Independent Pricing and Revenue Tribunal (IPART) rate pegging. For 2026-27 Council's rate peg increase is set at 3.2%. This modest increase is overshadowed by 4% award increases and the rapid escalation in materials.

As indicated above, the varied Performance Improvement Order (PIO), received by Council on 30 June 2026, requires Council to become financially sustainable by 30 June 2027. The ultimate action for Council to address in the PIO is the adoption of an operational plan and annual budget for FY2027-28 that demonstrates an operating position at or above break even before capital grants and contributions and excludes reliance on proceeds from asset sales.

The varied PIO contains an additional 12 actions which must also be met at various stages over the next 10 months. One of the most pressing and urgent actions is the development of a draft Revenue Improvement Strategy. The PIO requires that this draft Strategy be prepared by 28 September 2026, placed on public exhibition and then formally adopted by Council by 28 October 2026. The Strategy must identify lawful recurring revenue opportunities including fees, charges, commercial returns, grant optimisation and any special variation or rate review options.

At the time of writing, the Executive Leadership Team have met and discussed a variety of revenue improvement opportunities, some of which are already included in Council's adopted Strategic Finance & Governance Improvement Plan and positions resolved by Council at their extraordinary April 2026 meeting. These include but are not limited to:

- Strategic review of all fees & charges.
- Market sounding for Blue Haven Terralong (including 2 Havilah Place), 11 Manning Street and Shoalhaven Street catalyst sites.
- Market rates for existing and future tenants of Council properties.
- Paid parking.
- Strategic partnership / EOI for Kiama Coast Holiday Parks.
- Special rate levies for tourist areas.
- Organisational structural reforms and detailed workforce plans to reduce headcount via natural attrition.
- Review of service review recommendations to ascertain any further opportunities to garner savings or revenue.
- Improved policies and planning instrument changes to support greater commercial opportunities.
- Special Rate Variations.

A workshop is being facilitated by Council's Finance and Major Project Advisory Committee with the entirety of Council's leadership team to gather ideas, feedback and build shared understanding. Feedback and options derived from this workshop

Questions with notice

19.5 Question with notice: Councillor Matters - Revenue opportunities for Council (cont)

will then be provided to Council to finalise the draft Revenue Improvement Strategy. A separate session for the Councillors has been booked to workshop the options which can then be finalised into a future council report.

It is also worth noting that various strategic planning programs, being delivered under Council's Delivery Program and Operational Plans, are also contributing to opportunities for revenue improvement. These include:

- the adopted Local Housing Strategy and draft Employment Lands Strategy generally look to increase and diversify our rate base
- as part of implementing the adopted Local Housing Strategy, and draft Employment Lands and Visitor Economy Strategies progressing with the necessary planning work to facilitate the development of the catalyst sites identified in the Kiama Town Centre Study
- and that as part of implementing draft Employment Lands and Visitor Economy Strategies review commercial permissibility's for tourist locations/foreshores (i.e. Public Recreation zoned land) where appropriate.

The varied PIO is explicit in that revenue opportunities must be recurring, rather than one off. Property divestment in and of itself is not recurring and simply liquifies assets. However strategic property divestment to facilitate joint venture opportunities which could increase the rate base and provide an ongoing rental revenue is being actively explored.

The sentiment of Councillor Matters' is shared and understood by the administration. The CEO is leading a broad range of work in partnership with the council leadership team to do all that can be achieved to help increase revenue, reduce the deficit and ultimately lift the State Imposed PIO. Achieving the requirements of the PIO requires the collective effort of both the elected body and staff. Hard and, at times, unpopular decisions will continue to need to be made.