KIAMA MUNICIPAL COUNCIL
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Public Exhibition Engagement Report

Community Engagement Strategy 2026-28

Council is committed to fostering meaningful and measurable community engagement that supports better, more sustainable outcomes for the municipality while strengthening the diversity of community voices.

This report summarises the community and stakeholder feedback received during the public exhibition of the draft. It should be read in conjunction with the Internal Consultation Engagement Report, which can be found here: yoursay.kiama.nsw.gov.au/community-engagement-strategy-2026-28

Public exhibition period

Monday 22 June to Sunday 26 July 2026

Promotional activities

Dedicated Your Say Page | Media release | Inclusion Monthly newsletter | Social Media posts | Posters distributed | Local Newspaper inclusion

How community got involved

102 website visitors

70+ pop-up participants

7 submissions received



What we heard

Community feedback demonstrated strong support for the Draft Community Engagement Strategy and its focus on building trust, transparency and meaningful community participation.

Key themes raised through submissions, community pop-ups and internal stakeholder consultation included:

- Ensuring community engagement genuinely influences Council decisions through early engagement, clear decision-making parameters and stronger "closing the loop" practices.
- Broadening participation and inclusion, particularly for underrepresented groups and people who do not typically engage with Council.
- Exploring innovative and accessible engagement methods, including digital engagement tools.
- Strengthening internal capability, coordination and governance arrangements to support consistent engagement practices across Council.
- Clarifying the link with the Statewide Community Participation Plan and how Council engages on planning matters and manages statutory consultation requirements.
- Supporting clear processes for managing community submissions and representations made through Councillors during exhibition periods.

While most feedback supported and reinforced the direction of the draft Strategy, several opportunities for improvement were identified and incorporated into the final document.

Read on for a detailed overview of what we heard and the outcomes for the final Community Engagement Strategy.

What we heard

Submission feedback

Community members were invited to provide written feedback on the draft strategy via Your Say Kiama or by emailing Council. A total of seven submissions were received during the exhibition period. All submissions have been read and considered in full. This report provides a high-level summary of the key themes raised and staff responses.

Submission feedback	Staff response	Outcome
Trust, transparency and accountability - Genuine community influence Three (3) submissions raised concerns about whether community engagement genuinely influences Council decisions. Feedback emphasised the importance of clearly communicating what is open to influence, explaining constraints and decision-making parameters, demonstrating how feedback has been considered, and ensuring engagement is meaningful rather than perceived as a “box-ticking” exercise.	The draft Strategy responds through its Open and Honest, Proactive, Genuine and Accountable principles. It requires engagements to identify what the community can influence, encourages engagement before options are finalised, and strengthens commitments to closing the loop by explaining how feedback was considered and influenced outcomes. The feedback reinforces the importance of consistently communicating the scope for influence, engaging early and demonstrating how community input has informed decisions.	**No amendment to the draft Strategy.**
Improving engagement methods - Collaborative and deliberative engagement Three (3) submissions called for more participatory and diverse engagement approaches. Suggestions included public forums, co-design, working groups, deliberative forums, community panels and clearer guidance on when these methods should be used. Feedback also encouraged earlier community involvement in defining complex issues and drawing on relevant local or external engagement expertise.	The draft Strategy provides for a range of collaborative and deliberative methods and uses the IAP2 Spectrum to guide the appropriate engagement level. The appropriate approach will vary according to purpose, complexity, community impact, legislative requirements and scope for influence. Further guidance will be provided through the Community Engagement Toolkit, the Policy and building staff capacity rather than prescribing fixed triggers within the Strategy.	**No amendment to the draft Strategy.**

Submission feedback	Staff response	Outcome
Inclusion and representation Three (3) submissions highlighted opportunities to achieve broader and more representative participation. Suggestions included collecting demographic information to understand participation gaps, improving opportunities for part-time residents and ratepayers, reaching people who do not regularly participate, and strengthening inclusion of people with disability and neurodivergent community members.	The draft Strategy includes commitments to reduce barriers, strengthen relationships with community representatives and support co-design with underrepresented groups. A better understanding of participant demographics could help Council identify gaps and target engagement, while maintaining privacy and accessible participation. Feedback on specific community services and facilities will be referred to relevant Council service areas, where appropriate.	**Amendment to the draft Strategy.** A new action has been added under Promoting Equity, Diversity and Inclusion to investigate voluntary demographic data collection, including piloting approaches and assessing their effectiveness.
Improving engagement methods - Digital engagement opportunities Two (2) submissions proposed a dedicated community app or digital platform to increase participation and maintain ongoing connections with the community. Suggestions included surveys and polls, representative digital panels and incentives for regular participation.	Council recognises the potential for digital tools to make participation easier and reach people who may not engage through traditional methods. The draft Strategy already commits to maintaining and strengthening the digital engagement platform, Your Say Kiama, alongside face-to-face and other participation options. The feedback will inform consideration of future digital engagement tools through Council's broader digital service priorities.	**No amendment to the draft Strategy.**
Ongoing engagement and community relationships - Consultation fatigue/desire for efficiency Two (2) submissions raised concerns about the volume, cost-effectiveness of consultations and engagement fatigue, particularly when participants do not see evidence that their feedback influences outcomes. Feedback highlighted the importance of purposeful engagement and maintaining meaningful communication with the community.	The draft Strategy recognises engagement fatigue and community trust as key challenges. It commits to coordinating and combining engagement activities where appropriate to reduce duplication and effectively close the loop so that participants understand how their input was considered. Existing actions address engagement coordination, efficiency, closing the loop and continuous improvement. The feedback reinforces the need for purposeful, proportionate engagement and for outcomes to be communicated.	**No amendment to the draft Strategy.**

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Submission feedback	Staff response	Outcome
Trust, transparency and accountability Two (2) submissions raised governance and implementation matters, including whether sufficient resources will be available to deliver the Strategy, the currency of the referenced Community Participation Plan (CPP), and the requirement for engagement before significant changes to existing Council services.	The draft Strategy establishes the overarching framework for community engagement. Council will continue to consider implementation and resourcing as part of its annual planning and budget processes. The CPP is a separate statutory document prepared under the Environmental Planning and Assessment Act 1979. During the public exhibition period, the NSW Government's state-wide Community Participation Plan was released, providing the opportunity to update the draft Strategy accordingly. Changes to Council services may warrant community engagement where there is a genuine opportunity for community input to influence the decision or its implementation. However, engagement may not be appropriate in all circumstances, including where Council must act to meet legislative, regulatory, safety, or operational obligations, or where there is limited scope for community influence. In these circumstances, Council may instead focus on clearly informing the community about the change, the reasons for it and any resulting impacts.	**Amendment to the draft Strategy.** The CPP section will be updated and expanded to clarify the relationship between the Strategy and the Statewide CPP.

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Community Engagement Strategy 2026-28

Community Pop-Up activities & feedback summary

Two community pop-ups were held at high-traffic locations: the Kiama Farmers' Market on Tuesday 1 July 2025 and IGA Gerringong on Monday 21 July 2025, with approximately 70 community members participating in total. Activities included QR code signage linking to the draft Strategy and submission form, an action-prioritisation activity and a preference-voting activity to identify participants' preferred engagement methods.

Activity 1: Action priority setting
This activity provided participants with an opportunity to prioritise proposed actions in the draft Strategy. Feedback was received across all four action areas, with the strongest concentration of responses relating to Promote equity, diversity and inclusion and Meet the community where they are.

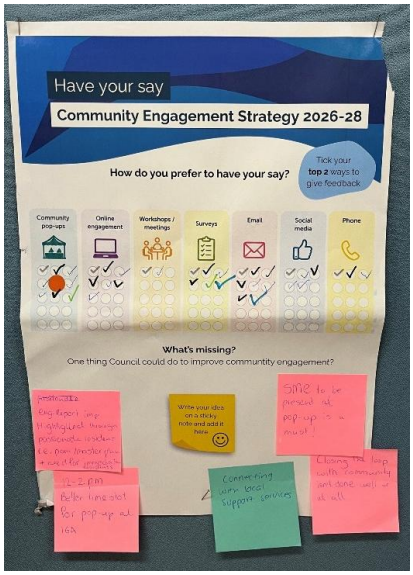


The activity identified the following top four actions:

1. Better involve young people, Aboriginal communities and people with disabilities.
2. Better explain how community feedback influences decisions.
3. Coordinate consultants so people are not asked the same questions repeatedly.
4. Strong leadership commitment to community engagement.

The results reinforce the four action areas. The specific feedback will inform the implementation of the Strategy, including the prioritisation of actions across the years of delivery.

Activity 2: How to have your say
This activity asked participants "How do you prefer to have your say?" and invited them to select their two preferred engagement methods and identify one thing Council could do to improve community engagement.



The results showed a preference for a mix of face-to-face and accessible communication channels. Community pop-ups and online engagement received strong support, with email also identified as a preferred channel. Surveys, social media and phone engagement received some support, while workshops and meetings attracted comparatively less interest, reflecting the greater time commitment required.

The results reinforce the importance of offering multiple ways for the community to participate, rather than relying on a single engagement channel, as reflected in the draft Strategy.

Feedback received at community pop-ups	Staff response	Outcome
Trust, transparency and accountability - Genuine community influence Participants emphasised the importance of keeping the community informed throughout engagement processes, particularly for longer-term projects, and clearly demonstrating how feedback was considered and what outcomes were achieved.	The draft Strategy reflects this feedback through its Accountable principle and close the loop commitments, including keeping the community informed throughout the project lifecycle and explaining how feedback was considered and influenced outcomes.	**No amendment to the draft Strategy.**
Inclusion and representation Participants highlighted the importance of hearing from a broader and more representative cross-section of the community, including residents, renters and workers as well as ratepayers. Participants supported approaches that intentionally reach people who may not normally participate in Council engagement.	Broadening participation is a key commitment of the draft Strategy, including additional effort to reach underrepresented groups and communities of place, identity, interest and need through the Promoting equity, diversity and inclusion action area.	**No amendment to the draft Strategy.**
Improving engagement methods - Digital engagement opportunities Participants encouraged Council to explore creative and innovative ways to increase participation and understand community sentiment, including a dedicated engagement app, simple polls, creative campaigns, and incentives or recognition for ongoing participation. Digital tools were seen as an opportunity to make participation easier and potentially support regular feedback from a broader cross-section of the community.	The draft Strategy supports creative and innovative engagement, allowing methods to be tailored to the purpose, audience and circumstances of each engagement. It includes a commitment to maintain and strengthen digital engagement platform, Your Say Kiama, to improve accessibility, reach a broader cross-section of the community and support timely and transparent participation. The draft Strategy also includes an action to explore community sentiment measurement tools to better understand community satisfaction and perceptions of Council services and decision-making.	**No amendment to the draft Strategy.**

Feedback received at community pop-ups	Staff response	Outcome
Improving engagement methods - Community pop-ups Participants highlighted the value of having relevant subject-matter experts available at community pop-ups to answer questions and provide accurate, up-to-date information.	The purpose and format of each pop-up will determine the staff and subject-matter expertise required. Where project-specific or technical questions are anticipated, involving relevant subject-matter experts can support meaningful conversations and provide the community with accurate and timely information.	**Amendment to the draft Strategy.** The action table - community pop-up action has been updated to include attendance of relevant subject-matter experts.
Collaborative and deliberative engagement Participants called for more structured, ongoing opportunities to participate in Council decision-making, including community committees, advisory groups, and representative community panels. Participants considered these mechanisms valuable alongside project-specific consultation and suggested a clearer framework for how Council gathers and considers ongoing community input	Council acknowledges the value of collaborative and deliberative engagement approaches in supporting informed decision-making and ongoing community participation. The draft Community Engagement Strategy adopts a principles-based approach that enables a range of engagement methods, including advisory groups, committees and deliberative processes, to be used where appropriate. Council recognises existing community representative bodies as important stakeholders and routinely engages them on matters relevant to their purpose. However, they form one part of Council's broader engagement approach. Broader community engagement helps ensure diverse perspectives are considered, including those not represented through formal committees or advisory groups. Council's approach to advisory groups, committees and other representative bodies is guided by the *Committees Framework Policy*, which establishes the governance arrangements and principles for these groups.	**No amendment to the draft Strategy**
Ongoing engagement and community relationships Participants emphasised the value of ongoing, relationship-based engagement rather than one-off consultation. Continuity of staff knowledge, local experience and established community relationships was considered important, with concerns that staff turnover can affect organisational knowledge and continuity of engagement.	The draft Strategy supports ongoing engagement and relationship-building through collaboration with community representatives and actions to strengthen staff engagement capability and consistent organisational practices. Staff retention and workforce continuity are addressed through Council's broader workforce planning and management processes.	**No amendment to the draft Strategy**

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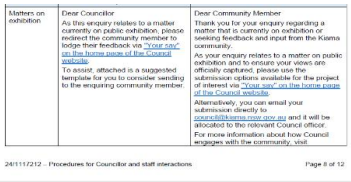
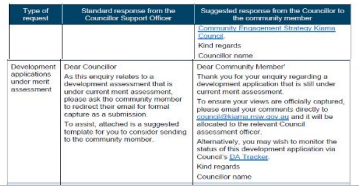
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Internal stakeholder feedback

Meetings were held with key internal stakeholders to identify opportunities to strengthen the draft Strategy and support continuous improvement.

Internal feedback received	Staff response	Outcome
Clarifying roles and responsibilities Feedback highlighted the need for clearer roles and responsibilities among project leads/subject-matter experts, the Community Engagement Team, and external consultants, including expectations for information sharing and the use of Council's engagement processes and Toolkit.	Community engagement is a shared responsibility across Council. Clearer expectations for project leads and consultants will support greater consistency and ensure engagement is planned, delivered and closed the loop on in accordance with the strategy. The Community Engagement Toolkit will be reviewed and updated to improve guidance, clarify responsibilities, support consultant-led engagement where required, and strengthen alignment with Council's broader project management processes.	**Amendment to the draft Strategy.** The Roles and Responsibilities section has been updated to include consultants as delivery partners responsible for planning, delivering and closing the loop on engagement.
Supporting effective Community Pop-Ups Feedback highlighted the need to balance the duration and resourcing of community pop-ups with community availability and meaningful participation. Staff also identified the value of relevant subject-matter experts attending where project-specific or technical information is required.	The purpose and format of each pop-up will determine its duration, resourcing and required expertise. Involving relevant subject-matter experts where appropriate supports meaningful conversations and provides accurate and timely information to the community.	**Amendment to the draft Strategy.** The community pop-up action has been updated to include relevant subject-matter experts and consideration of community availability.
Supporting staff wellbeing during engagement Feedback emphasised the importance of respectful interactions during engagement activities and appropriate measures to support staff psychosocial safety.	Staff safety and wellbeing are important considerations when planning and delivering engagement, particularly for contentious or sensitive matters. Appropriate risk assessment, staff preparation and support will be considered as part of engagement planning. In addition, staff psychosocial safety will be supported through Council's broader work health and safety processes.	**No amendment to the draft Strategy.**
Strengthening internal consultation Feedback identified opportunities for a more consistent approach to internal consultation, including involving	Effective community engagement relies on early and coordinated internal consultation. Strengthening internal processes will help ensure relevant teams can contribute at the appropriate stage and understand how their input has been considered.	**Amendment to the draft Strategy.** The Community Engagement Toolkit action under Building Staff Capacity has been updated to

Internal feedback received	Staff response	Outcome
relevant teams earlier and closing the loop with staff who have provided input.		strengthen internal consultation processes and alignment with the Project Management Framework.
Community Participation Plan In September 2026 the NSW Government Department of Planning Housing and Infrastructure adopted the Statewide Community Participation Plan (CPP). This CPP replaces Council's CPP and provides consistent and transparent consultation requirements for planning and development matters across all NSW councils. There is additional information that is not included in the statewide CPP that will need to be included in Council's CES: - Details on how planning matters will be notified, and to who. - The statewide CPP should be attached as an appendix to the CES (link). - Suggest that the standard public exhibition timeframe in the CES is 28 days. Days is defined as calendar days including weekends and public holidays, but excluding the period from 20 December to 10 January (inclusive). - Suggest that a recommendation be included in regard to formally revoking the Kiama CPP 2019.	The CPP establishes Council's statutory requirements for engagement on planning and development matters, while the Community Engagement Strategy provides the broader framework for statutory and non-statutory engagement. The NSW Government has implemented a Statewide CPP which replaces Council's CPPs, therefore the Kiama CPP is no longer in force and the CES should be updated to reference the Statewide CPP and any additional information on how council will engage with the community on planning matters.	**Amendment to the draft Strategy.** The CPP section will be updated and expanded to clarify the relationship between the Strategy and the Statewide CPP. **Council report:** • Resolution to formally revoke the Kiama CPP 2019. • Include the NSW statewide CPP as an attachment Council Report.
Managing submissions and councillor representations Feedback highlighted the need for greater clarity and consistency in how emails and representations received by Councillors during Council public exhibition periods are managed, particularly the distinction between Councillor representations and formal submissions.	Clear submission processes support consistent recordkeeping, analysis and reporting of community feedback. The Procedures for Councillor and Staff Interaction already provides guidance on the distinction between formal submissions and representations made directly to Councillors, including suggested responses for Councillors to provide to community members. To avoid duplication and maintain consistency across Council's governance framework, it is proposed that the	**Amendment to the draft Strategy.** The Staff training action under Build Staff Capacity has been updated to include Councillors in the community engagement training, ensuring they can incorporate best-practice engagement into their role.

Internal feedback received	Staff response	Outcome
The Procedures for Councillor and staff interaction provided clear guidance on this distinction, and suggested responses for Councillors to provide to community members. It is suggested that the following section from the procedure be included in the CES:  Matters on exhibition Dear Councillor As this enquiry relates to a matter currently on public exhibition, please redirect the community member to lodge their feedback via 'Your say' on the home page of the Council website. To assist, attached is a suggested template for you to consider sending to the enquiring community member. Dear Community Member Thank you for your enquiry regarding a matter that is currently on exhibition or seeking feedback and input from the Kiama community. As your enquiry relates to a matter on public exhibition and to ensure your views are officially captured, please use the submission options available for the project of interest via 'Your say' on the home page of the Council website. Alternatively, you can email your submission directly to council@kiama.nsw.gov.au and it will be allocated to the relevant Council officer. For more information about how Council engages with the community, visit 24/11/2122 ... Procedures for Councillor and staff interactions Page 8 of 12  Type of request Standard response from the Councillor Support Officer Suggested response from the Councillor to the community member Community Engagement Strategy Kiama Council Kind regards Councillor name Development applications under mont assessment Dear Councillor As this enquiry relates to a development assessment that is under current mont assessment, please ask the community member to redirect their email for formal capture as a submission. To assist, attached is a suggested template for you to consider sending to the community member. Dear Community Member' Thank you for your enquiry regarding a development application that is still under current mont assessment. To ensure your views are officially captured, please email your comments directly to council@kiama.nsw.gov.au and it will be allocated to the relevant Council assessment officer. Alternatively, you may wish to monitor the status of this development application via Council's Ask Kiacker. Kind regards Councillor name	Procedures for Councillor and Staff Interaction be referenced within the Community Engagement Strategy rather than reproducing the detailed guidance within the Strategy itself.	An appendix has been included identifying key legislation, policies and procedures that support the implementation of the Strategy, including the Procedures for Councillor and Staff Interactions. **Council report:** to reinforce the Procedure for Councillor and staff interactions.
Internal community engagement working group Feedback supported reinstating the cross-departmental staff working group to support consistent implementation of the Strategy and Toolkit across Council.	The cross-departmental working group provides an opportunity to strengthen coordination and consistency in community engagement across Council, share lessons and good practice, and collectively support implementation of the Strategy and ongoing development of the Community Engagement Toolkit.	**Amendment to the draft Strategy.** The working group action under building staff capacity has been updated to reinstate the cross-departmental engagement staff working group.
Streamlining development application submission processes with YSK There is a dedicated project page on Your Say Kiama for development applications, however submissions are currently made through the Council website which is inconsistent.	Opportunities to improve coordination between existing systems and processes can be investigated to support more efficient administration and a clearer experience for the community. As part of the Strategy's commitment to continuous improvement, Council will investigate opportunities to streamline these processes, including how submissions are	**No amendment to the draft Strategy.**

Internal feedback received	Staff response	Outcome
Feedback identified opportunities to include a submission form on the Your Say Kiama page for development applications which will improve the management of community input.	captured, recorded and shared across relevant systems and teams.	

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Public Exhibition Engagement Report

Community Engagement Strategy 2026-28

Outcomes

As a result of community and stakeholder feedback, several amendments have been made to strengthen the Strategy, including:

- Adding an action to investigate voluntary demographic data collection to better understand participation and representation.
- Expanding content relating to planning and development matters, including clarification of the relationship between the Community Engagement Strategy and the NSW Statewide Community Participation Plan.
- Updating community pop-up actions to include consideration of community availability and attendance by relevant subject-matter experts where appropriate.
- Expanding Community Engagement training actions to include Councillors.
- Updating the Roles and Responsibilities section to recognise consultants as engagement delivery partners.
- Strengthening actions relating to internal consultation processes and alignment with Council's Project Management Framework.
- Reinstating the cross-departmental Community Engagement Working Group.
- Including an appendix of related legislation, policies and procedures that support implementation of the Strategy.

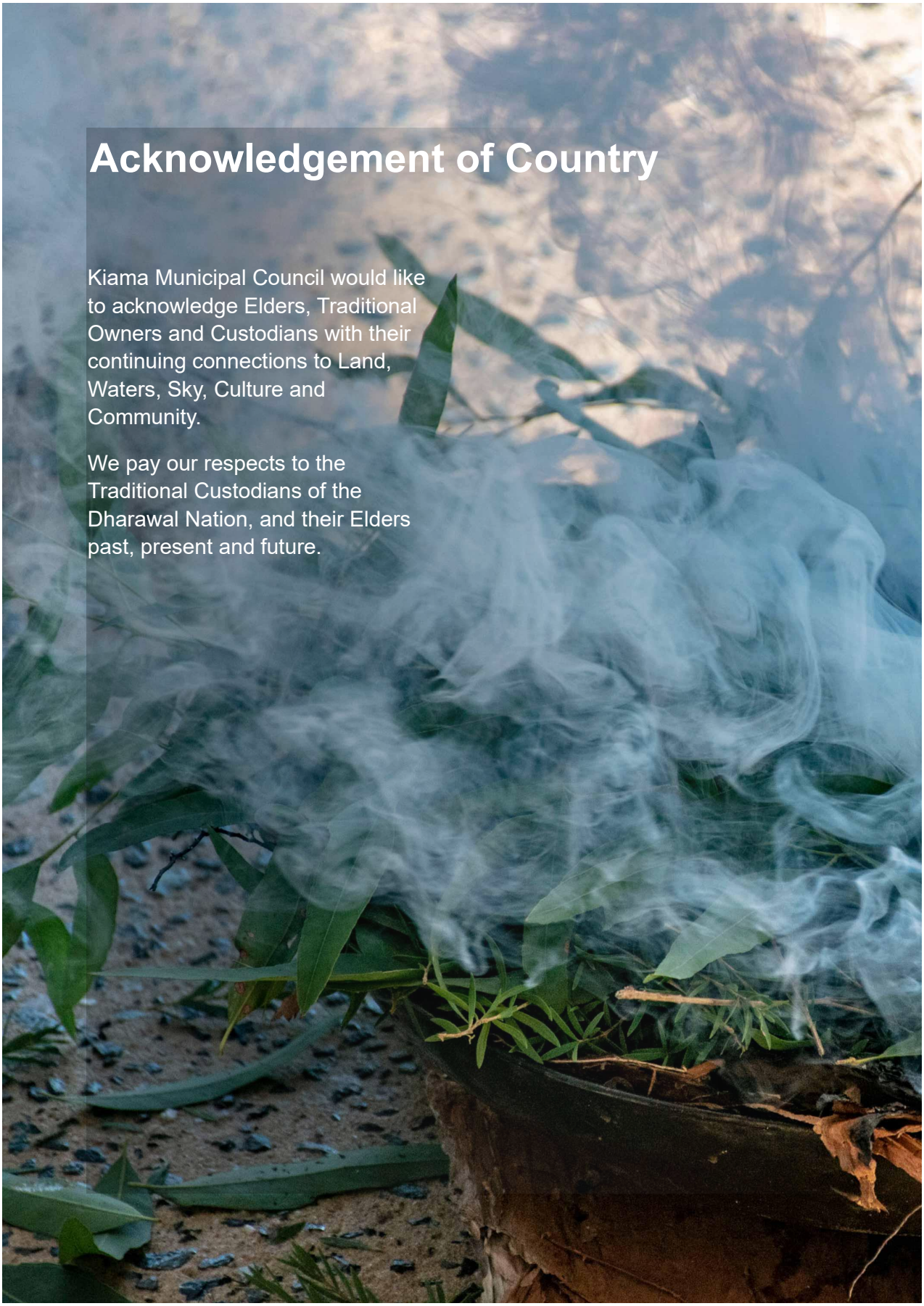
Overall, the exhibition findings validated the strategic direction of the draft Community Engagement Strategy, with feedback focused primarily on strengthening implementation, governance, and continuous improvement rather than requiring significant changes to the Strategy's principles or framework.



Community Engagement Strategy

2026–28

KIAMA MUNICIPAL COUNCIL
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Acknowledgement of Country
Kiama Municipal Council would like to acknowledge Elders, Traditional Owners and Custodians with their continuing connections to Land, Waters, Sky, Culture and Community.
We pay our respects to the Traditional Custodians of the Dharawal Nation, and their Elders past, present and future.

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Message from the Mayor



It is my pleasure to present the Community Engagement Strategy 2026-28 to our community.

Listening to our community is an essential component of how we operate at Kiama Municipal Council.

It is in our DNA and it is a non-negotiable for any Council worth its salt.

We are here to serve the community and that is why it is vital that we consult with everyone who wants to have a say when we make decisions that affect all residents of our local government area.

The Community Engagement Strategy will be the guide for our organisation, from the Councillors and all staff members, to be committed to open and honest discourse.

We pride ourselves on transparency so that we are accountable for our actions, which may not always be popular but will always be what we think are the responsible ones for the Kiama LGA.

Kiama Council is committed to keeping you informed throughout the life of any project, big or small.

We offer various ways for the community to have their say, whether that's online, face to face at our community pop-ups, via surveys, workshops and those good old-fashioned methods of sending mail or making phone calls.

Please continue to have your say, be heard and help us build a brighter future for Kiama.

Councillor Cameron McDonald
Mayor, Kiama Municipal Council

What is community engagement?

Community engagement is how Kiama Municipal Council works with the community to share information, seek feedback, and involve people in decisions that affect them.

It provides opportunities for the community to contribute to the development of Council plans, policies, programs, services and projects, helping Council understand local needs, values, and aspirations. This supports informed decision-making and leads to better outcomes for the community.

Council recognises local knowledge, lived experience and community ideas are essential to achieving sustainable and community-focused outcomes.

The Social Justice Principles guide our approach to community engagement:
Access | Equity | Participation | Rights

When we engage

Council undertakes community engagement when:

- There is an opportunity for the community to influence actions, outcomes, or decisions.
  For example, when developing a new strategy, plan, policy or project, the community is invited to help inform the final document or decision.
- There is a legislative or statutory requirement.
  For example, when a development application or planning proposal is on public exhibition, the community can review the information and make a submission before a decision is made.
- Council determines engagement will strengthen outcomes, relationships, or community trust.
  For example, when changes to services are being considered, or a project may affect residents.



Engagement workshop at Kiama High School, 2024

Community engagement framework

Council has two key documents that guide community engagement: the Community Engagement Strategy (this Strategy) and the NSW Statewide Community Participation Plan. Together, these documents provide the framework for how Council engages with the community across its broader functions as well as statutory planning and development matters.

For the purpose of this Strategy, community engagement refers to the broad range of activities used to inform, consult and involve the community in Council decision-making. Community participation refers to the statutory opportunities for the community to participate in planning and development matters as required under the Environmental Planning and Assessment Act 1979 and the NSW Statewide Community Participation Plan. Other statutory matters requiring public exhibition, notification or consultation will be undertaken in accordance with the relevant legislative requirements.

Community Engagement Strategy

The Strategy sets out how Kiama Council engages with its community to inform decision-making and support meaningful participation in Council's plans, projects, programs, policies and services.

It has been prepared in accordance with the Local Government Act 1993 and forms part of Council's Integrated Planning and Reporting (IP&R) framework. It guides engagement activities across the organisation and establishes the principles, approaches and tools Council uses to ensure community members have opportunities to be informed, provide feedback and contribute to decisions that affect them.

NSW Statewide Community Participation Plan

The NSW Statewide Community Participation Plan (see Appendix 2) guides community participation in planning and development matters across the state. It establishes the statutory requirements for community participation under the Environmental Planning and Assessment Act 1979, including:

- Public exhibition requirements for planning and development matters.
- Notification requirements for certain development applications and planning proposals.
- Minimum exhibition periods for strategic planning documents.
- Opportunities for the community to make submissions and provide feedback on planning-related proposals.

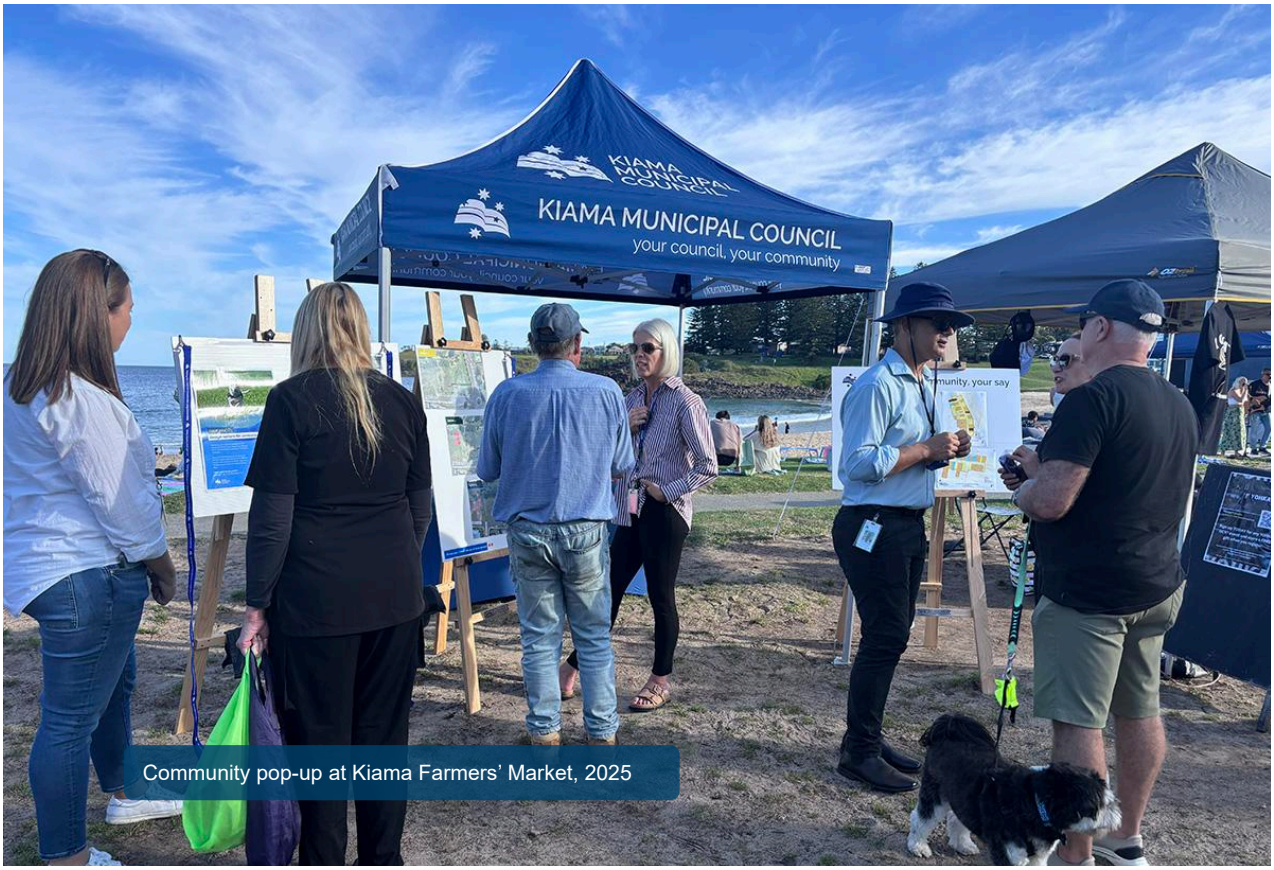
Council undertakes community participation for planning and development matters in accordance with the NSW Statewide Community Participation Plan and associated legislative requirements. The Statewide CPP standardises statutory requirements, while Council retains flexibility to determine how best to engage its community on local matters.

Our commitment to community engagement

Council is committed to fostering meaningful and measurable community engagement that supports better, more sustainable outcomes for the municipality while strengthening the diversity of community voices.

Our principles are:

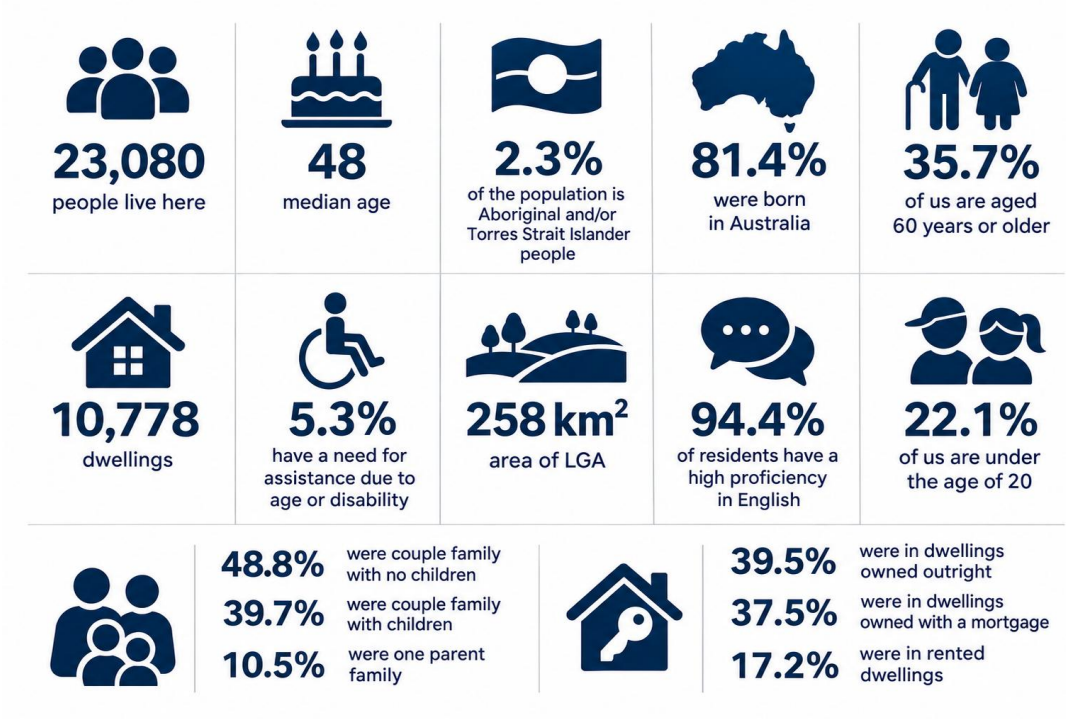
- **Open and honest**
  Engagement will be transparent and clearly communicate how community feedback will be considered and how decisions are made, including explanations where feedback cannot be adopted.
- **Proactive**
  Engagement will seek to understand community perspectives early in the decision-making process, before options are finalised.
- **Genuine**
  Engagement will actively listen to community views, ensuring feedback is respectfully heard, accurately captured and thoughtfully considered.
- **Inclusive and accessible**
  Engagement will meet the community where they are, using approaches that enable people of diverse backgrounds, abilities and circumstances to participate meaningfully.
- **Accountable**
  Engagement will support clear oversight through ongoing communication. Council will close the loop by keeping the community and stakeholders informed at all stages of the project lifecycle and demonstrating how input has influenced outcomes.



Community pop-up at Kiama Farmers' Market, 2025

Local characteristics, opportunities and challenges

Understanding our community to build a stronger, more connected and inclusive future.



Source: https://app.remplan.com.au/kiama/community/summary

Challenges and opportunities

Kiama LGA's community characteristics create challenges and opportunities for how and when the community engages. Understanding these factors helps Council design inclusive, responsive and effective engagement approaches.

An ageing population

The Kiama LGA has a higher median age than the NSW average, with a growing number of residents aged 60 and over. Older residents bring valuable life experience, skills and knowledge that enrich our community, and many make significant contributions through volunteering and active participation in community life. Council will continue to provide a mix of traditional and accessible engagement methods to support older people to participate.

Changing demographics and population growth

The Kiama LGA continues to attract new residents, including tree-changers and commuters. While this growth brings fresh perspectives and a willingness to participate, new residents may feel less connected to the community or be unaware of opportunities to engage. There are also increasingly diverse expectations about how and when people want to be involved. Council will respond by maintaining and strengthening its digital engagement platform, Your Say Kiama, to improve accessibility, reach a broader cross-section of the community and support timely, transparent participation.

Communities of place

The Kiama LGA includes several towns and villages, including Kiama, Gerringong, Jamberoo, Kiama Downs and Minnamurra, each with its own identity, priorities and sense of place. This geographic spread can make it challenging to reach all communities and balance different perspectives. Council will continue to take a place-based approach to engagement, meeting people where they are through local pop-ups, targeted activities and online opportunities to ensure broad and inclusive participation.

Community trust and engagement fatigue

Like many councils, Kiama faces the challenge of community members feeling their feedback does not always influence decisions, which can lead to engagement fatigue and lower participation rates. Council will address this by coordinating and, where appropriate, combining engagement activities across the organisation to streamline processes and reduce duplication. Council will also continue to better "close the loop" and share outcomes, helping to strengthen confidence in the engagement process.

Seasonal population and tourism

Kiama experiences significant seasonal population changes, with an influx of visitors and part-time residents during peak holiday periods. These groups are often not captured through traditional engagement methods and busy holiday periods are not always ideal for consultation. At the same time, this presents an opportunity to capture a broader range of perspectives, particularly on issues such as tourism, infrastructure and place experience.



Community Pop-up for Nighttime Economy Strategy, 2026

How we engage

Community engagement is undertaken when there is an opportunity for impacted communities to influence specific actions, outcomes or decisions or when there is a statutory requirement to do so.

Our process

Every engagement is tailored to the project and the people it affects. While approaches may vary, Council follows a consistent four-step process. Staff are supported by a community engagement toolkit that includes templates and practical guidance for undertaking community engagement.

Stage	Description
Design	We start by understanding what the project is about and who may be affected. At this stage, we: • clarify the purpose and scope of the engagement. • identify stakeholders we need to hear from. • decide what feedback can influence. This helps ensure engagement is clear, targeted and meaningful from the outset.
Plan	We then plan how the engagement will work. This includes: • selecting the right ways to engage (for example, surveys, workshops, pop-ups and/or online tools). • considering timing, resources and accessibility needs. • setting out how feedback will be collected and used. Planning helps make engagement inclusive, realistic and well coordinated.
Deliver	During this stage, we conduct engagement activities. We: • invite community and stakeholders to share their views. • provide clear information to support participation. • collect and record feedback in a consistent way. We monitor engagement to ensure it serves its purpose and reaches the intended audience.
Close the loop	After engagement, we review and share what we heard. This includes: • analysing and summarising feedback. • reporting to decision-makers and project teams. • communicating outcomes back to the community. We explain how community input was considered and how it influenced decisions, helping build trust and transparency.

Level of engagement

Council uses four levels of community engagement, based on the International Association for Public Participation (IAP2) Spectrum. The appropriate level of engagement for each project depends on several factors, including the engagement's purpose, the level of impact on the community, the complexity of the issue, legislative or statutory requirements, and project timeframes.

While the IAP2 Spectrum includes an “empower” level, it is rarely used because elected councillors make final decisions for the community.

	Inform	Consult	Involve	Collaborate
Engagement goal	To provide community with the right information to help them understand a Council plan, policy, program or activity.	To gather community feedback on a Council plan, policy, program or activity.	To work with community in the development of a Council plan, policy, program or activity, ensuring their views are clearly understood and considered.	To partner with community in the development and delivery of a Council plan, policy, program or activity.
Council commitment	We will keep you informed throughout the life of the project.	We will keep you informed, listen to your feedback, and share how community input influenced our final decision.	We will work with you to ensure your feedback is directly considered and share how community's input influenced our final decision.	We will incorporate your advice and recommendations into our final decision.
Example methods	Council website Social media Council e-newsletter	Online or paper surveys Call for submissions Community pop-ups	Digital engagement Workshops Panel discussions	Council committees Working groups

Decision making

Community views, ideas and local knowledge are an important part of Council's decision-making process. However, community feedback is one of several considerations that inform decisions, as shown in the diagram below.



Diagram adapted from Wollongong City Council, Community Engagement Strategy 2024

Who we engage

Our community includes many different people and groups, with a wide range of interests, priorities and needs. Meaningful engagement helps Council understand these different perspectives and make balanced, informed decisions.

When planning community engagement, Council will identify and consider stakeholders who may be interested in, affected by or benefit from a specific action, outcome or decision. Additional effort will be made to reach underrepresented groups to deliver inclusive engagement approaches that are culturally appropriate and responsive to their needs.

Key stakeholders	Description
Residents and ratepayers	People who live in and/or pay rates within the Kiama Local Government Area (LGA).
Children and young people	Young people who live, study or spend time in the Kiama LGA represent the future of the community.
Communities of place	People connected by location, such as towns, villages, neighbourhoods or streets.
Communities of interest	Groups connected by shared activities, interests, events or experiences.
Communities of identity	People of different ages, cultural backgrounds, abilities, gender identities and religions.
First Nations communities	First Nations people in building a trusting and respectful relationship and upholding their culture, knowledge and heritage. An “Aboriginal Engagement Protocols” will guide Council on engagement and consultation with the Aboriginal community, using a meaningful, culturally safe, supportive and accountable approach.
Communities of need	People who may be more affected by Council decisions or face barriers to participation, including people experiencing or at risk of homelessness, people with disability, people from non-English speaking backgrounds, renters and those impacted by emergencies or disasters.
Schools and education providers	Early-learning services, primary and secondary schools, and other education providers.
Business community	Local businesses, industry groups, business networks and chambers of commerce.
Users of Council facilities and services	People who use Council services and facilities such as libraries, parks, beaches, sporting facilities and recreation centres.
Community organisations and groups	Council committees, precinct and resident groups, community networks, faith-based organisations, volunteer groups, and sporting and recreation clubs.
NSW and Australian Government agencies	State and Commonwealth departments and agencies with responsibilities, programs or plans that affect the Kiama LGA.

Key stakeholders	Description
Neighbouring councils and joint organisations	Nearby local councils and regional bodies, including joint organisations and sector representatives.
Visitors and tourists	People who visit the Kiama LGA for leisure, business or events.

Roles and responsibilities

The roles outlined below explain how community engagement is a shared responsibility across Council and the community. While this Strategy focuses on Council's engagement approach, its success depends on the active involvement of elected representatives, staff, consultants and community stakeholders.

Role	Responsibilities
Mayor and Councillors	Represent the community, stay informed on engagement activities and use insights to support informed decision-making.
Executive Leadership (CEO and Directors)	Promote a strong culture of community engagement across Council and ensure meaningful engagement informs planning and decision-making.
Managers and Project Leads (incl. consultants)	Plan, deliver and close the loop on community engagement for projects and services that impact the community, working with the Community Engagement Team and using the community engagement toolkit.
Communications and Community Engagement Team	Provide engagement training, tools and advice for staff. Coordinate engagement activities across Council and maintain the engagement schedule and dashboard.
Community and stakeholders	Stay informed, participate in engagement opportunities, and provide input to help shape Council decisions.



Community Emissions Reduction Plan Focus Group, 2025

Engagement methods matrix

The following methods matrix provides an overview of commonly used engagement methods. Selection of appropriate methods will be based on the level of engagement required, project scope and complexity, available budget and timeframe, legislative or statutory obligations, and the needs of stakeholders and the community.

Methods	Inform	Consult	Involve	Collaborate
Council website	X			
Community e-newsletter: Kiama Council Connect	X			
Social media	X			
Media release	X			
Ad placement in local newspapers	X			
Ad placement on rates notices	X			
Letters and email notifications	X			
Letterbox drops	X			
Posters, pamphlets, flyers	X			
Outdoor signage	X			
Print or digital factsheets and FAQs	X			
Doorknocking	X	X		
Presentation, meeting or briefing (in-person, phone or virtual)	X	X	X	
Opinion poll		X	X	
Comment, compliment, complaint form		X		
Calls for submission		X	X	
Council meetings or town hall engagements		X	X	
‘Your Say Kiama’ project page		X	X	
Online or printed survey		X	X	
Community pop-ups		X	X	
Online discussion board		X	X	X
Citizen science (e.g. wildlife reporting)		X	X	X
Reference or advisory groups		X	X	X
Committees or Special councils (e.g., youth council)		X	X	X
Workshops		X	X	X
Focus groups		X	X	X
Panel discussions		X	X	X
Roundtables		X	X	X
Co-design			X	X
Working groups			X	X
Design charette			X	X
Deliberative forums				X
Consensus conference				X

Community participation on planning matters

Community participation for planning and development matters is undertaken in accordance with the NSW Statewide Community Participation Plan (CPP) (see appendix 2) and relevant legislation. The community should be given opportunities to participate in strategic planning as early as possible so their views can be genuinely considered when the long-term vision is established. At the Development Application stage, applications that are low impact will not require public exhibition if they comply with the planning controls.

The table below outlines Council's typical approach to community participation for planning matters. Legislative requirements, including exhibition periods and notification requirements, will apply and may vary depending on the type of proposal.

Planning matter	Minimum exhibition period*	Community participation approach
Planning proposal (PP)	As determined by the Gateway determination	Your Say Kiama project page, public exhibition and, where appropriate, direct notification to adjoining and affected property owners
Draft development control plan (DCP)	In accordance with legislative requirements and the NSW Statewide CPP	Your Say Kiama project page, public exhibition and, where appropriate, direct notification to adjoining and affected property owners
Draft contributions plan	In accordance with legislative requirements and the NSW Statewide CPP	Your Say Kiama project page, public exhibition and, where appropriate, direct notification to adjoining and affected property owners
Draft local strategic planning statement (LSPS)	In accordance with legislative requirements and the NSW Statewide CPP	Your Say Kiama project page and public exhibition
Structure plans, precinct plans and master plans	As determined by Council and the NSW Statewide CPP	Your Say Kiama project page, public exhibition and, where appropriate, direct notification to adjoining and affected property owners
Planning agreements (VPAs)	In accordance with legislative requirements and the NSW Statewide CPP	Your Say Kiama project page, public exhibition and, where appropriate, direct notification to adjoining and affected property owners
Planning-related strategies	In accordance with legislative requirements and the NSW Statewide CPP	Your Say Kiama project page and public exhibition
Development applications, modifications and reviews of determination – that require public exhibition	In accordance with legislative requirements and the NSW Statewide CPP	Where required, public exhibition and direct notification to adjoining and affected property owners. These can be viewed on the Application Tracker via 'Your Say Kiama'. **Note:** See further details below
Complying development certificates (CDCs)	No public exhibition for CDCs in the Kiama LGA	In the Kiama LGA, CDCs are not required to be notified, however these can be viewed on the Application Tracker via 'Your Say Kiama'.

* See Timeframes and exhibition periods

Development applications

Where development applications are required to be publicly exhibited, written notification will occur in accordance with the below table:

Level of Notification	Who will be notified	Development types *
Level 1	Notification within a buffer of 25m in urban areas and 100m in rural areas, to the development site.	• Minor internal and external alterations and additions (residential, commercial, industrial) • Dwelling house • Dual occupancy • Secondary dwelling • Ancillary residential development such as garages, carports and swimming pools • Change of use • Signage and advertising signage • Torrens and Community Title subdivision 1 – 5 lots • Strata Title subdivision
Level 2	Notification within a buffer of 60m in urban areas and 200m in rural areas, to the development site.	• Multi dwelling housing • Tourist and visitor development • Commercial development • Industrial development • Agricultural development • Torrens and Community Title subdivision 6-10 lots
Level 3	Notification within a buffer of 120m in urban areas and 500m in rural areas, to the development site.	• Residential flat building • Shop top housing • Large scale tourist and visitor development • Function centre / Events • Pub, registered clubs and entertainment facilities • Large scale commercial development • Large scale industrial development or offensive industrial development • Intensive livestock agriculture • Torrens and Community Title subdivision >11 lots

* For other development types, discretion will be used to determine the level of notification.

All submissions must be made in accordance with the Environmental Planning and Assessment Act 1979 and the NSW Statewide CPP. Submissions can only be made on development applications that are on public exhibition and must be made within the public exhibition period via Your Say Kiama. Feedback received outside of this will not constitute a formal submission for the purposes of section 4.15(1)(d) of the Environmental Planning and Assessment Act 1979.

In accordance with the Government Information (Public Access) Act 2009, all submissions, including personal information, may become publicly available. Persons who have made a submission will receive an acknowledgement and updates on the development application in accordance with the Act and Regulations.

Community engagement on other statutory matters

Council undertakes community engagement on a range of other statutory matters in accordance with relevant legislation. These matters may include plans of management, road closures, land matters, naming proposals, masterplans, leases and licences, and other proposals requiring public exhibition, public notice or community consultation.

The table below outlines Council's typical approach to community engagement for other statutory matters. Consultation requirements, exhibition periods and notification methods will vary depending on the legislative requirements and the nature of the proposal.

Statutory matter	Minimum exhibition period	Community engagement approach
Plans of management (Council community land & council-managed Crown Land)	In accordance with legislative requirements (28 days exhibition, 42 days for submissions)	Your Say Kiama project page and public exhibition
Road closures	In accordance with legislative requirements (28 days)	Your Say Kiama project page and public notice
Land disposals	In accordance with legislative requirements	Your Say Kiama project page, public exhibition and consultation in accordance with legislative requirements
Leases and licences over council, community and Crown Land	In accordance with legislative requirements (28 days)	Your Say Kiama project page and public exhibition
Naming and renaming proposals	In accordance with legislative requirements (28 days)	Your Say Kiama project page and public exhibition
Masterplans and place-based planning projects	As determined by Council (28 days)	Your Say Kiama project page, public exhibition and where appropriate, direct notification to adjoining property owners
Other statutory matters	In accordance with legislative requirements	Engagement undertaken in accordance with legislative requirements and the principles of this Strategy

Timeframes and exhibition periods

Community engagement and participation timeframes will be determined based on legislative requirements, the complexity of the matter and the level of community interest. Council's standard public exhibition period is 28 days, unless legislation or specific circumstances require otherwise. Exhibition and consultation periods are expressed as calendar days, including weekends but excluding public holidays. The period between 20 December and 10 January (inclusive) is excluded when calculating public exhibition periods.

To ensure submissions can be considered as part of the decision-making process, submissions must be received during the advertised public exhibition or consultation period.

Actions

These actions are intended to guide consistent, best-practice engagement across the organisation, noting their delivery will be subject to available resources, legislative requirements and budget considerations.

Promoting equity, diversity and inclusion

Council will:

1. Provide accessible and flexible ways to engage through clear, plain English information and a range of face-to-face, online, paper-based and multimodal participation options that meet diverse needs and circumstances.
2. Strengthen collaborations with community representatives to support engagement with communities of place, identity, interest and need.
3. Support co-design with under-represented groups by collaborating with young people, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities, people with disability and others to deliver engagements that are inclusive, culturally appropriate and responsive to their needs.
4. Investigate opportunities for voluntary demographic data collection to better understand participation and inform more inclusive and representative engagement, including through piloting and evaluating different approaches.

Meet community where they are

Council will:

5. Clearly communicate and promote engagement opportunities to maximise community awareness and participation through a range of channels, including website, e-newsletters, social media and local newspapers.
6. Coordinate community pop-ups across the LGA with relevant subject matter experts, ensuring activities are inclusive, accessible and located to reach a diverse cross-section of the community
7. Maintain and strengthen digital engagement platform, Your Say Kiama, to uphold accessibility, reach a broader cross-section of the community and support timely, transparent participation.
8. Improve efficiency and reduce engagement fatigue by coordinating and combining engagement activities across Council where appropriate, enabling the community to provide feedback on multiple topics through streamlined, well-timed, and accessible processes.

Build staff capacity

Council will:

9. Reinstate the cross-departmental working group to implement the Community Engagement Strategy and collectively refine the community engagement toolkit.
10. Enhance the community engagement toolkit by developing and maintaining templates and resources, with a focus on working with consultants, strengthening internal consultation and better aligning with the Project Management Framework.
11. Build staff and councillor knowledge and skills by developing and delivering in-house community engagement training, ensuring staff and councillors can incorporate best-practice engagement as a standard part of their work.
12. Embed a culture of engagement by increasing visibility and understanding of community engagement through internal communications and leadership messaging.

Close the loop

Council will:

13. Continue to develop processes to close the loop in a variety of ways, including Council reporting, website, email, social media and other channels, with a focus on explaining how community feedback was considered in the decision-making process.
14. Embed a culture of continuous improvement by reviewing and evaluating community engagement projects, enhancing practices from lessons learned and sharing insights to build capability and ensure approaches remain effective and responsive to community needs.
15. Measure effectiveness and outcomes by assessing engagement activities against the objectives and principles of the Community Engagement Strategy, including equity, diversity and inclusion, and their contribution to the Community Strategic Plan's outcomes and strategies.
16. Monitor community sentiment through media monitoring, workshops, community events and explore a municipality-wide community satisfaction survey.

Evaluation of the strategy

Evaluation of the Strategy will occur through:

- **Ongoing review** of engagement activities to assess alignment with the objective and principles of the Community Engagement Strategy, including equity, diversity, and inclusion.
- **Annual reporting**, including progress against actions within the Operational Plan and reporting through Council's Annual Report.
- **Contribution to Delivery Program outcomes**, demonstrating how community engagement has informed priorities, actions, and decision-making.
- **Long-term review**, to inform future updates to the Community Engagement Strategy and support achievement of the Community Strategic Plan outcomes.

Findings from evaluation activities will inform improvements to engagement practices, tools and capability building, and will be reported through appropriate reporting mechanisms.

Case study: Kiama Local Housing Strategy

To demonstrate community engagement in practice, this case study highlights Council's engagement in the preparation of the Local Housing Strategy. This Strategy provides a long-term framework for sustainable, well-planned growth and supports the delivery of diverse and appropriate housing to guide the region's housing needs over the next 20 years.

Why engagement occurred

Council undertook community consultation to ensure the Strategy reflected local needs, community values and stakeholder expectations.

Engagement was used to gather feedback on growth locations, housing types, infrastructure considerations and the balance between development and Kiama's identity.

Who was engaged

Engagement involved a wide range of participants, including:

- Residents across the municipality
- Precinct groups and community organisations
- Councillors and internal staff from planning, communications and community development
- Developers, industry representatives and state agencies
- Young people through targeted youth consultation.

How community got involved

When engagement occurred

Multiple phases of engagement informed the strategy:

- 1 April to 3 June 2024 – community and stakeholder engagement for the Growth and Housing Strategy.
- 19 July to 16 August 2024 – public exhibition: Draft Growth and Housing Strategy (v1).
- 21 February to 27 April 2025 – public exhibition: Draft Local Housing Strategy (v2).

How engagement occurred

Methods included:

- Online and written submissions
- Community pop-ups
- Youth consultation
- Stakeholder and combined committee workshops
- Meetings with precincts, industry and state government agencies.



Key findings

Community and stakeholder feedback highlighted:

- Strong support for a strategic long-term approach to housing
- Concerns about infrastructure capacity and the need for clear planning
- The importance of protecting Kiama's character and environment
- Need for diverse, affordable housing options
- Desire for transparency and ongoing community involvement.

How feedback informed the Strategy

These activities provided detailed qualitative and quantitative insights into community housing needs and priorities.

Feedback led to refinements in the draft strategy, including:

- Updated growth locations based on community and agency input
- Clearer infrastructure planning requirements
- Adjustments to housing diversity targets
- Stronger alignment with NSW Government planning frameworks
- These improvements contributed to the strategy's successful endorsement by the NSW State Government in October 2025.

Related documents

- Your Say Kiama - Local Housing Strategy
- Kiama Council Local Housing Strategy



Local Housing Strategy information session, April 2025

How to get involved

Council is committed to engaging the community and stakeholders on decisions that affect them, and to meeting people where they are so we can hear from a diversity of voices.

Online

Your Say Kiama is Council's online engagement platform provides an overview of projects open for feedback, consultations in progress and updates on projects previously on exhibition. Online engagement is supported by targeted activities such as community pop-ups, workshops, webinars and stakeholder meetings.

The platform also provides a direct link to the NSW Government consultation platform and Council's Development Application Tracker.

Visit yoursay.kiama.nsw.gov.au.

In person

Community pop-ups

Community pop-ups are casual, drop-in sessions across the LGA where you can speak directly with Council staff. They are usually held in the week after each Ordinary Council Meeting and focus on plans, policies and strategies on exhibition or open for consultation. These sessions are supported by online engagement through Your Say Kiama and other targeted stakeholder engagement such as workshops, webinars and stakeholder meetings.

Visit www.kiama.nsw.gov.au/Community-Pop-Ups for details of upcoming sessions.

Planning and Development hub

Council's Planning and Development Hub provides an opportunity to discuss planning and development-related enquiries with a Duty Planner. This walk-in advice service complements Council's existing Development Advice services.

Community members can seek information about development applications, planning controls, strategic planning projects and planning processes.

Visit www.kiama.nsw.gov.au/Facilities/Planning-and-Development-Hub for more information and opening times.

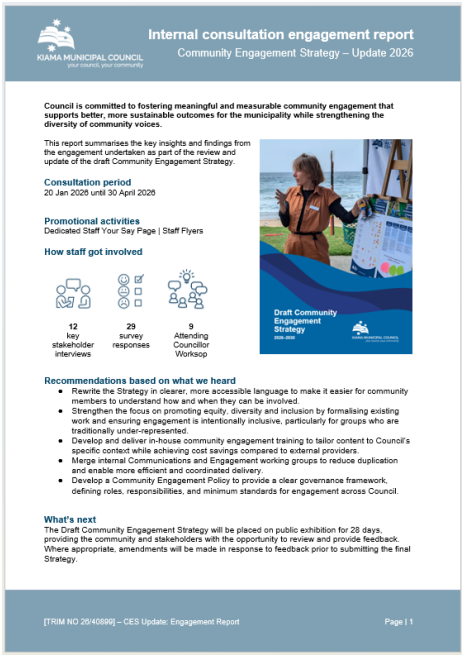
Stay informed

Get Council news, consultation opportunities and updates delivered straight to your inbox.

Visit www.kiama.nsw.gov.au/Email-newsletters.

Appendix 1: Community Engagement Report

The Community Engagement Reports for the development and update of the Community Engagement Strategy are available at: yoursay.kiama.nsw.gov.au/community-engagement-strategy-2026-28



Internal consultation engagement report

Community Engagement Strategy – Update 2026

Council is committed to fostering meaningful and measurable community engagement that supports better, more sustainable outcomes for the municipality while strengthening the diversity of community voices.

This report summarises the key insights and findings from the engagement undertaken as part of the review and update of the draft Community Engagement Strategy.

Consultation period
20 Jan 2026 until 30 April 2026

Promotional activities
Dedicated Staff Your Say Page | Staff Flyers

How staff got involved

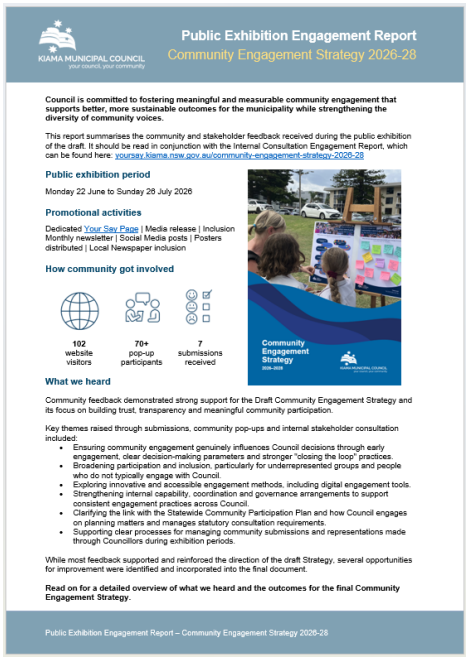
12 key stakeholder interviews
29 survey responses
9 Attending Councillor Worksop

Recommendations based on what we heard

- Rewrite the Strategy in clearer, more accessible language to make it easier for community members to understand how and when they can be involved.
- Strengthen the focus on promoting equity, diversity and inclusion by formalising existing work and ensuring engagement is intentionally inclusive, particularly for groups who are traditionally under-represented.
- Develop and deliver in-house community engagement training to tailor content to Council's specific context while achieving cost savings compared to external providers.
- Merge internal Communications and Engagement working groups to reduce duplication and enable more efficient and coordinated delivery.
- Develop a Community Engagement Policy to provide a clear governance framework, defining roles, responsibilities, and minimum standards for engagement across Council.

What's next
The Draft Community Engagement Strategy will be placed on public exhibition for 28 days, providing the community and stakeholders with the opportunity to review and provide feedback. Where appropriate, amendments will be made in response to feedback prior to submitting the final Strategy.

[TRIM NO 26/40899] – CES Update: Engagement Report Page | 1



Public Exhibition Engagement Report

Community Engagement Strategy 2026-28

Council is committed to fostering meaningful and measurable community engagement that supports better, more sustainable outcomes for the municipality while strengthening the diversity of community voices.

This report summarises the community and stakeholder feedback received during the public exhibition of the draft. It should be read in conjunction with the Internal Consultation Engagement Report, which can be found here: yoursay.kiama.nsw.gov.au/community-engagement-strategy-2026-28

Public exhibition period
Monday 22 June to Sunday 26 July 2026

Promotional activities
Dedicated Your Say Page | Media release | Inclusion Monthly newsletter | Social Media posts | Posters distributed | Local Newspaper inclusion

How community got involved

102 website visitors
70+ pop-up participants
7 submissions received

What we heard

Community feedback demonstrated strong support for the Draft Community Engagement Strategy and its focus on building trust, transparency and meaningful community participation.

Key themes raised through submissions, community pop-ups and internal stakeholder consultation included:

- Ensuring community engagement genuinely influences Council decisions through early engagement, clear decision-making parameters and stronger "closing the loop" practices.
- Broadening participation and inclusion, particularly for underrepresented groups and people who do not typically engage with Council.
- Exploring innovative and accessible engagement methods, including digital engagement tools.
- Strengthening internal capability, coordination and governance arrangements to support consistent engagement practices across Council.
- Clarifying the link with the Statewide Community Participation Plan and how Council engages on planning matters and manages statutory consultation requirements.
- Supporting clear processes for managing community submissions and representations made through Councillors during exhibition periods.

While most feedback supported and reinforced the direction of the draft Strategy, several opportunities for improvement were identified and incorporated into the final document.

Read on for a detailed overview of what we heard and the outcomes for the final Community Engagement Strategy.

Public Exhibition Engagement Report – Community Engagement Strategy 2026-28

Appendix 2: Related strategies, policies and procedures

This Strategy should be read in conjunction with the following legislation, policies and supporting documents which guide community engagement and community participation activities undertaken by Council.

Legislation

- Environmental Planning and Assessment Act 1979
- Environmental Planning and Assessment Regulation 2021
- Government Information (Public Access) Act 2009
- Local Government Act 1993
- Local Government (General) Regulation 2021
- Privacy and Personal Information Protection Act 1998

State government frameworks

- Integrated Planning and Reporting Framework for Local Government in NSW
- NSW Statewide Community Participation Plan

Public Council documents

- Asset Management Strategy
- Committees Framework Policy
- Community Strategic Plan
- Councillor and staff interaction Policy
- Delivery Program and Operational Plan
- Development Assessment Policy
- Long Term Financial Plan
- Workforce Management Strategy

Internal policies and procedures

- Community Engagement Toolkit
- First Nations guidelines
- Policies framework
- Procedures for Councillor and staff interaction

Authorisation and version control

Owner/Responsible Officer	Communications and Engagement Manager
Department	Chief Executive Officer
Date adopted/endorsed	[date]
Resolution number (if applicable)	[number]
Next review date	December 2028
TRIM reference	[number]

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.

Date reviewed	Date adopted/endorsed	Brief detail of amendments
December 2015	March 2016	New Strategy
May 2023		Exhibited draft Strategy, withdrawn as required additional work
April 2024	June 2024	Reworked, redrafted Strategy
May 2026	Nov 2026	Updated Strategy 2026-28

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

How to contact council

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Respect
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Excellence

KIAMA MUNICIPAL COUNCIL
your council, your community

Department of Planning, Housing and Infrastructure

NSW GOVERNMENT

Community Participation Plan

1 September 2026

dphi.nsw.gov.au





Acknowledgement of Country

The Department of Planning, Housing and Infrastructure acknowledges that it stands on Aboriginal land. We acknowledge the Traditional Custodians of the land, and we show our respect for Elders past, present and emerging through thoughtful and collaborative approaches to our work, seeking to demonstrate our ongoing commitment to providing places in which Aboriginal people are included socially, culturally and economically.

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Community Participation Plan
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Secretary's foreword



A message from Kiersten Fishburn

We know that planning works best when it reflects what communities need and value. Local knowledge plays a vital role in shaping strategic plans and the assessment of development proposals.

The *Planning System Reforms Act 2025* lays the foundation for a modern planning system that is faster, fairer and focused on outcomes. One of its key commitments is creating a single statewide Community Participation Plan for all councils and planning authorities.

This plan brings consistency to consultation timeframes across NSW. It ensures communities have a strong voice in the planning system and sets clear expectations that engagement should match the scale and impact of a proposal or strategic plan.

We also understand that the planning system can seem complicated or daunting. That's why this plan explains the different ways you and your community can get involved at both the local and state level. It also encourages planning authorities to consult widely so decisions reflect your values, priorities and concerns.

Planning should be a partnership with people who know their communities best. That is why planning authorities can continue to develop their own engagement strategies that outline how councils and other planning authorities will work with their communities and ensure local context guides their approach.

Good participation must be accessible to everyone. This approach emphasises the importance of engaging respectfully with Aboriginal communities and people from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds. Everyone should be able to navigate a planning system that works for them.

This Community Participation Plan applies to planning authorities and functions subject to community participation requirements under the *Environmental Planning and Assessment Act 1979*. This includes the planning functions of the Minister for Planning and Public Spaces, the Department of Planning, Housing and Infrastructure and its Secretary, as well as all councils and relevant planning authorities across NSW.

I hope you find this plan a practical guide to participate in planning in NSW.



Kiersten Fishburn
Secretary, Department of Planning, Housing and Infrastructure

A Statewide Community Participation Plan

1

Commencement: This document commences on 1 September 2026.

What is the Community Participation Plan?

The Community Participation Plan (CPP) sets out how and when planning authorities will engage the community and stakeholders in decision-making processes related to planning functions.

This plan is applicable to all planning authorities including the Department of Planning Housing and Infrastructure (the Department), local councils and other State Government Departments and agencies. It is designed to clearly outline how and when the community can participate in planning decisions and processes, and when planning authorities exercise their relevant planning functions.

The plan has been prepared by the Planning Secretary to set out the mandatory community participation requirements in accordance with Division 2.6 of the *Environmental Planning and Assessment Act 1979* (EP&A Act).

Consistency and proportionality in community participation

Consistency and proportionality are key to the broader success of community participation. The Community Participation Plan standardises public exhibition timeframes across all planning functions, providing a consistent approach, no matter where you are in NSW.

Planning functions are subject to different levels of community participation that reflect the scale, complexity and potential impacts of the proposal or development. This ensures that exhibition requirements are proportionate to the scale and impact of the proposal.

This includes extended exhibition periods for draft strategic plans, as they establish the long-term vision and identify future needs for housing, jobs, infrastructure and connected communities. Early community engagement at this stage is critical, as it helps inform decisions about land use and the location of future development.

In contrast, some low-impact local development applications may not require public exhibition, reflecting their limited scale and potential impacts. This helps focus community participation on matters that are most likely to affect the community.

While some development types may not be publicly exhibited, they are still assessed on their merits. The consent authority must consider all relevant planning matters as part of the overall assessment process including issues such as privacy, overshadowing and heritage significance.

Engagement strategies

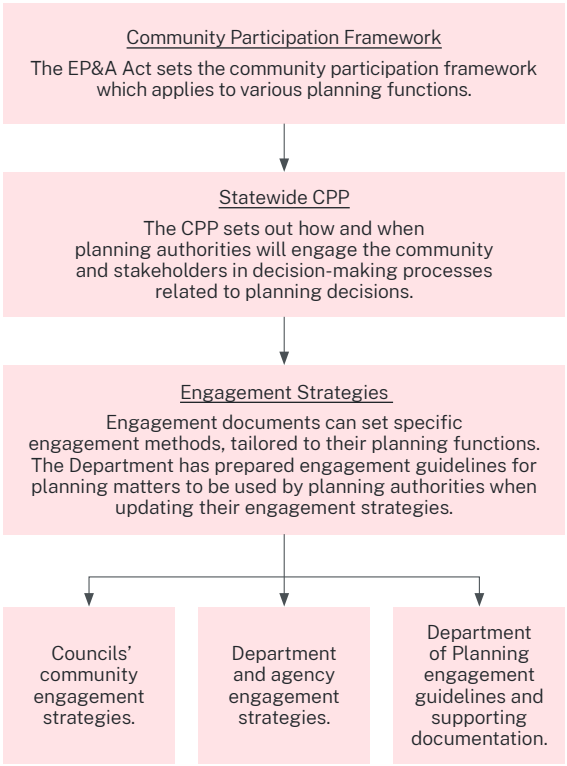
Councils and other planning authorities including the Independent Planning Commission can continue to specify engagement methods in their relevant engagement strategy within the parameters set by this plan. An engagement strategy must not specify timeframes for public exhibition of planning functions. These strategies outline the specific methods and tools that a planning authority will use to engage with communities and stakeholders. Every community is different, and engagement approaches should reflect the characteristics, needs and preferences of the communities they are intended to reach.

Councils and planning authorities are best placed to understand their communities and determine how to effectively engage with groups that may be harder to reach, including young people, people with disability, elderly, socio-economically disadvantaged, those living in rural areas, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders communities and culturally and linguistically diverse people.



Figure 1 shows the hierarchy of community participation legislation and related documents and their relationship to a planning authorities engagement strategy.

Figure 1: Community participation framework in NSW



Public participation – getting involved

Community participation is an essential part of the planning process and a fundamental part of the EP&A Act.

Anyone affected by, or interested in, NSW's planning system including individuals, groups, organisations and government bodies can provide feedback and get involved on planning matters.

Getting involved in the planning process by providing feedback on a proposed development, plan or policy is an important way for the community to have a meaningful say in how their local area changes over time.

Participation plays an important role in improving the design of projects, informing decision-making and building confidence in the planning system so that communities across NSW feel heard and reflected in the spaces that they live and work in.

Effective participation is achieved by:

- Facilitating discussion between stakeholders so they can hear each other's concerns and ideas
- Creating opportunities for upfront discussions that can reduce potential disputes
- Assisting decision makers identify community concerns
- Utilising local knowledge and expertise
- Empowering local communities in the planning process.

Community participation objectives

The principles in section 2.23(2) of the EP&A Act have been considered when developing this CPP, including the community participation objectives. These objectives are included below and are used when engaging with the community and stakeholders on planning matters.



Open and inclusive

Planning authorities will keep the community informed and promote equitable participation. This includes incorporating culturally appropriate practices where relevant and conducting engagement in a safe environment so that all community members can join in.



Easy to access

Planning authorities will advise the community early about how and when they can participate. Information and engagement opportunities will reflect how each community accesses information, using the formats, channels, times and locations that are most likely to reach the people affected.



Relevant

Planning authorities will clearly identify what aspects of the project can be discussed and ensure as many community members as possible can participate. Engagement activities will acknowledge previous community input and be tailored to the context — such as location, application type, assessment stage, and earlier engagement — as well as the scale, nature, and impacts of the proposal.



Timely

Planning authorities will start community participation as early as possible and continue it for an appropriate period, providing regular project updates so people stay informed. The community will be given reasonable time to provide a submission, and authorities will maintain ongoing engagement through local networks.



Proportionate

Planning authorities will concentrate engagement effort on the stages of planning and decision making where community input can have the greatest influence. Where key directions have already been established, engagement will be clear about what has been decided and focus on the matters that remain open to change.



Meaningful

Planning authorities will clearly explain how community submission influence decisions and be upfront about what aspects of a plan the community can shape. Decision makers will engage directly, provide relevant responses, and genuinely consider all input.

Notification and Exhibition

Minimum public exhibition periods

The *Environmental Planning and Assessment Act 1979* sets out minimum community participation requirements for the public exhibition of certain planning matters.

During a public exhibition period all relevant documentation is made publicly available, and the community is invited to make a submission outlining their views on the draft policy, plan or proposal.

When and how you may be notified

If you are directly affected by a proposal, you may receive a notification during public exhibition that provides information on how to view a proposal and how to lodge a submission. Consent authorities may undertake a site visit of the subject site or neighbouring properties to assess impacts as part of their assessment.

Planning authorities will specify how they engage the community on certain types of development in their community engagement strategies. Engagement methods include, but are not limited to the following:

Table 1: Examples of engagement methods for different levels of engagement

Level of engagement	Objective	Method
Make information available	Planning authorities will keep the community informed and promote equitable participation	• a letter • an email • an on-site notice • public exhibition – invite written submissions • documents made available on websites • media releases • mailing lists, Electronic Direct Mail (EDM) • community newsletters and emails • social media posts • updates to subscribers via the NSW Planning Portal
Invite broader community input	Planning authorities will advise the community early about how and when they can participate	
Actively gather community input	Planning authorities will clearly identify what aspects of the project can be discussed and ensure as many community members as possible can participate	• drop in sessions • public meetings • reference groups • focus groups • workshops • surveys • website content or, social media notification
Explore and refine the proposal with affected communities	Planning authorities will clearly explain how community submissions influence decisions and be upfront about what aspects of a plan the community can shape	

Submissions

A consent authority will consider all submissions received during a public exhibition period. In some cases, the number of submissions on a development application determines who the final consent authority is.

Anyone can make a submission. The contents of a submission may be a general response to the project, and not technically detailed. You do not need to be a specialist to have your say.

Late submissions may be considered at the discretion of the consent authority. Submissions must be made in writing and submitted online via the relevant planning authority's website. For the NSW Independent Planning Commission, the panel members will only accept a late submission in exceptional circumstances. It is recommended you contact the relevant consent authority to confirm.

For local development applications, it may be possible to make submissions via the NSW Planning Portal or through other means, such as by post or electronic mail – it is recommended you engage with your council to confirm. For any other consent authorities, it is recommended to contact the consent authority to confirm how submissions can be made.

Where a development is not required to be exhibited, a consent authority is not required to consider submissions as part of its assessment.

Material received outside of a public exhibition period

Feedback can be provided to the consent authority at any stage of an application. This includes planning functions that do not require public exhibition. Where a development application is not publicly exhibited, feedback can still be provided – however it is not considered a formal submission.

Staying up to date

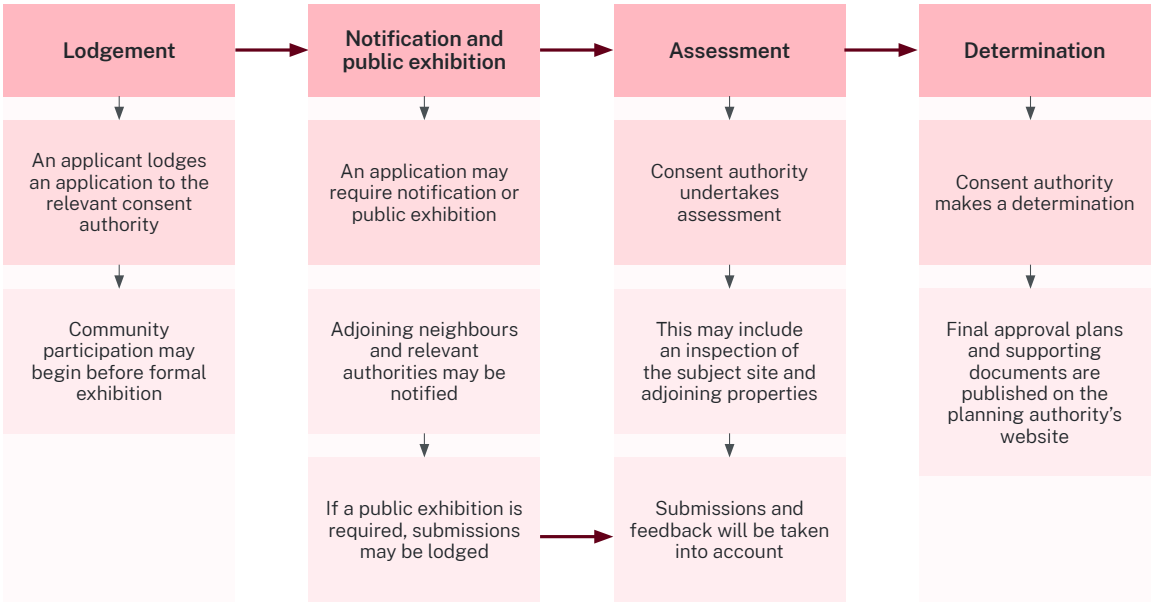
There are many ways to stay updated about development in your local area. You can sign up for alerts on specific projects such as planning proposals, new major projects and State significant development in your local government area.

Throughout this document you will find useful links to trackers and ways to subscribe to projects.

Process for development applications

Figure 2 shows the consultation process of a development application from lodgement to determination and outlines the key stages where participation occurs.

Figure 2: Summary of consultation during development assessment



Participating in planning functions

2

Planning functions

The CPP details exhibition timeframes for the following planning functions:

State Planning Framework – setting the rules and regulations

- Environmental Planning and Assessment Act 1979
- Environmental Planning and Assessment Regulation 2021
- State Environmental Planning Policies (SEPPs)

Strategic Planning – how my region and community will change overtime

- community participation plan (CPP)
- planning proposals for local environmental plans subject to a gateway determination
- development controls plan (DCPs)
- contribution plans
- regional or district plans
- local strategic planning statements (LSPS)
- activation precinct masterplans and delivery plans (including infrastructure delivery plans)
- structure plans, precinct plans and masterplans for urban renewal areas

Development Assessment – development that may impact where you live and work

- State significant projects
- regionally significant development
- local development
- designated development
- nominated integrated development or threatened species development
- environmental impact statement obtained under Division 5.1
- council-related development applications
- application for modification of development consent
- review of a determination or decision



State planning framework

Setting the rules and regulations

Acts, regulations and policies set the structure for the NSW planning system, providing a regulatory framework for planning decisions, including the assessment of development applications, making planning instruments and strategic planning.

You may be invited to lodge a submission on the following:

EP&A Act

The EP&A Act sets the structure for the NSW planning system. It is the principal legislation regulating land use in NSW and allows plans to be made to guide the process of development and regulate competing land uses.

EP&A Reg

The EP&A Regulation sets out how the procedural matters and requirements of the EP&A Act are carried out, including the provisions planning authorities must follow when assessing development applications.

SEPPs

Environmental planning policies are for State significant or statewide planning matters. They inform how land can be developed, managed and conserved in NSW.

Who is involved:

Department

The Department develops changes as needed and leads engagement

Councils

Councils provide expertise and feedback when an Explanation of Intended Effects is exhibited

Community

Provide feedback when an Explanation of Intended Effects is exhibited

Industry

Peak bodies and advocacy associations provide expertise



Case study

Providing feedback on a housing policy change

Yao saw a government announcement on his news feed that it would soon be easier to build more housing types in places with access to good infrastructure.

The article linked to the Department of Planning, Housing and Infrastructure's website, where he found information on the proposed policy, which included changes to planning controls in the State Environmental Planning Policy (Housing) 2021 (Housing SEPP).

Supportive of the changes, Yao was pleased he could provide feedback, as he lived further from services and jobs.

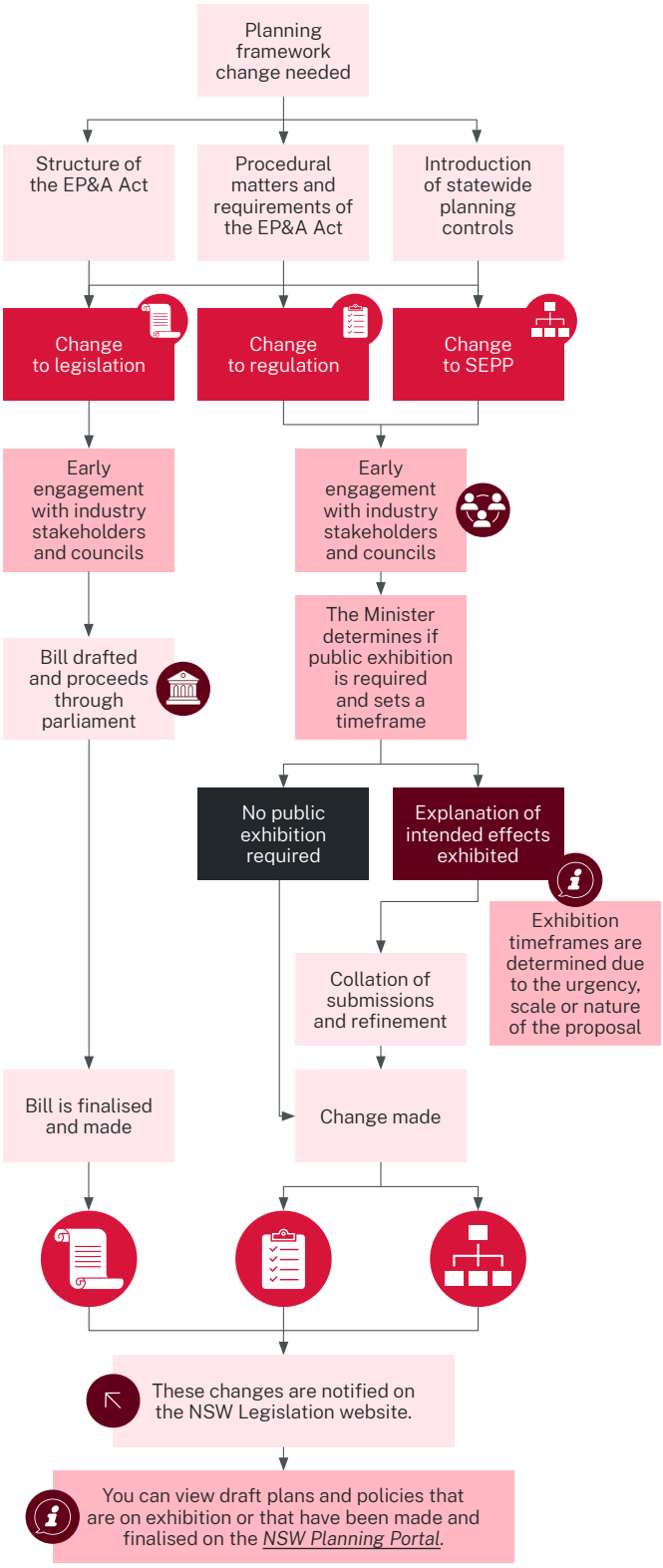
The Department's Explanation of Intended Effects (EIE) document outlined the proposed changes to the Housing SEPP, and where they would apply across NSW.

Although confused by technical planning language, he found infographics, videos and guides written in plain English on the website that helped him understand the proposal.

Yao submitted feedback through a guided form and subscribed to updates.

When the policy was finalised, he read the 'What we heard' document on the website and saw how feedback had informed changes.

Figure 3: Exhibition process – State planning





Strategic planning

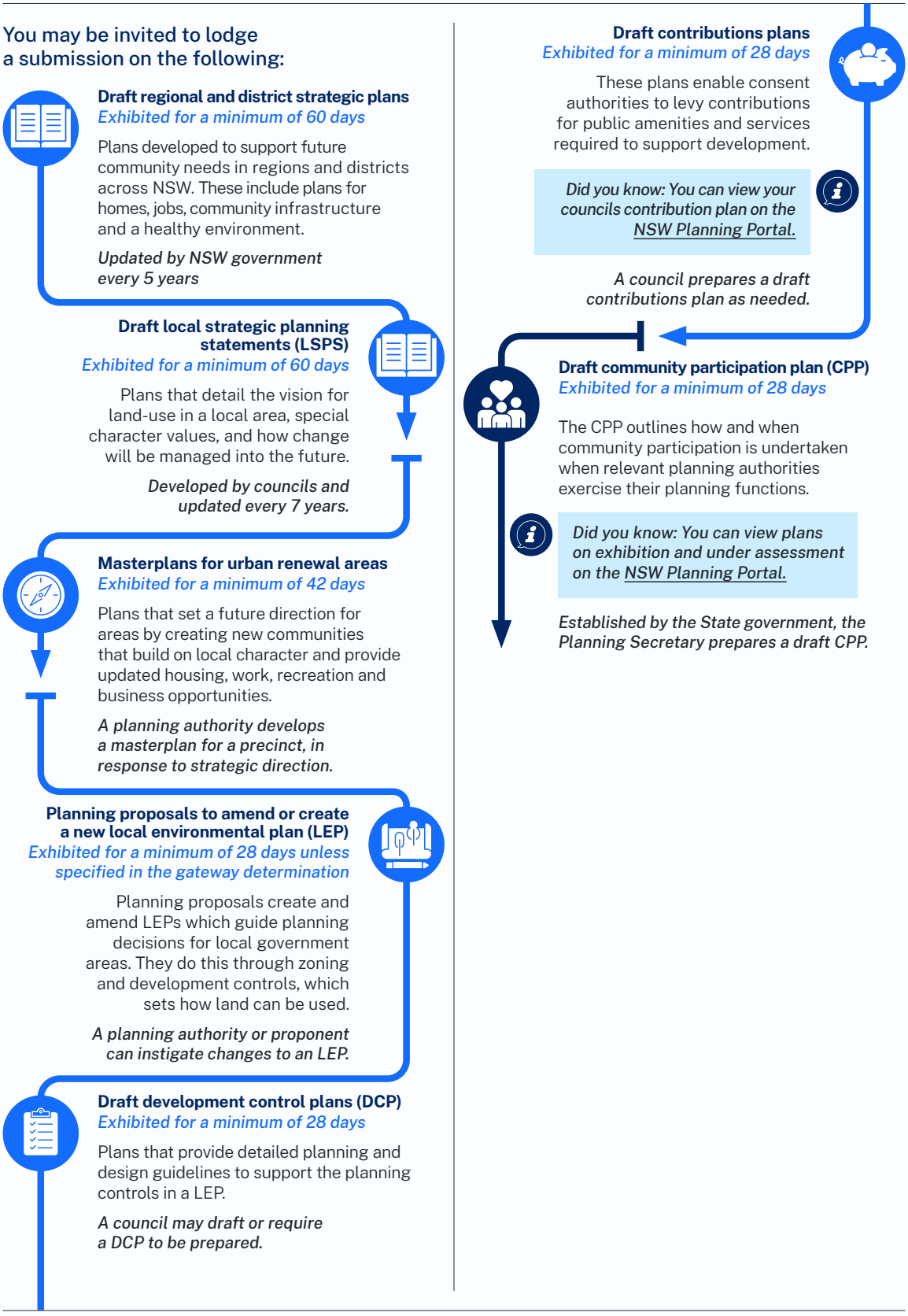
How my region and community will change over time

Strategic planning helps guide how places grow, change and are protected. It is the foundation for how governments influence the shape of communities, determine where homes are built, where jobs are located, and how services and infrastructure connect across the State and how the environment is conserved.

Early engagement builds community confidence in the planning system, provides greater transparency about how decisions are made and ensures that potential concerns and priorities are explored proactively.

This aligns with the object of proportionality by encouraging and strengthening early, meaningful community consultation at the strategic planning stage. This ensures the focus of engagement is targeted on identifying issues and priorities that can be addressed prior to development assessment.




You may be invited to lodge a submission on the following:
Draft regional and district strategic plans
Exhibited for a minimum of 60 days
Plans developed to support future community needs in regions and districts across NSW. These include plans for homes, jobs, community infrastructure and a healthy environment.
Updated by NSW government every 5 years
Draft local strategic planning statements (LSPS)
Exhibited for a minimum of 60 days
Plans that detail the vision for land-use in a local area, special character values, and how change will be managed into the future.
Developed by councils and updated every 7 years.
Masterplans for urban renewal areas
Exhibited for a minimum of 42 days
Plans that set a future direction for areas by creating new communities that build on local character and provide updated housing, work, recreation and business opportunities.
A planning authority develops a masterplan for a precinct, in response to strategic direction.
Planning proposals to amend or create a new local environmental plan (LEP)
Exhibited for a minimum of 28 days unless specified in the gateway determination
Planning proposals create and amend LEPs which guide planning decisions for local government areas. They do this through zoning and development controls, which sets how land can be used.
A planning authority or proponent can instigate changes to an LEP.
Draft development control plans (DCP)
Exhibited for a minimum of 28 days
Plans that provide detailed planning and design guidelines to support the planning controls in a LEP.
A council may draft or require a DCP to be prepared.
Draft contributions plans
Exhibited for a minimum of 28 days
These plans enable consent authorities to levy contributions for public amenities and services required to support development.
Did you know: You can view your councils contribution plan on the NSW Planning Portal.
A council prepares a draft contributions plan as needed.
Draft community participation plan (CPP)
Exhibited for a minimum of 28 days
The CPP outlines how and when community participation is undertaken when relevant planning authorities exercise their planning functions.
Did you know: You can view plans on exhibition and under assessment on the NSW Planning Portal.
Established by the State government, the Planning Secretary prepares a draft CPP.



Who is involved:

Department

The Department prepares regional strategic plans, policies and masterplans, and has a role in assessing planning proposals

Councils

Councils prepare strategic plans, contribution plans, masterplans and development control plans. Council also prepare and assess planning proposals

Community

The community provides the local perspective on strategic planning during public exhibition

Industry

Industry experts provide advice and feedback on proposals

Case study

Lodging a submission on the Sydney Region Plan

Myriam sees a post pop up on her social media account about a new plan called the Sydney Region Plan.

The post says that the Government is looking for the community to have their say on how Sydney will grow and transform over the next 20 years.

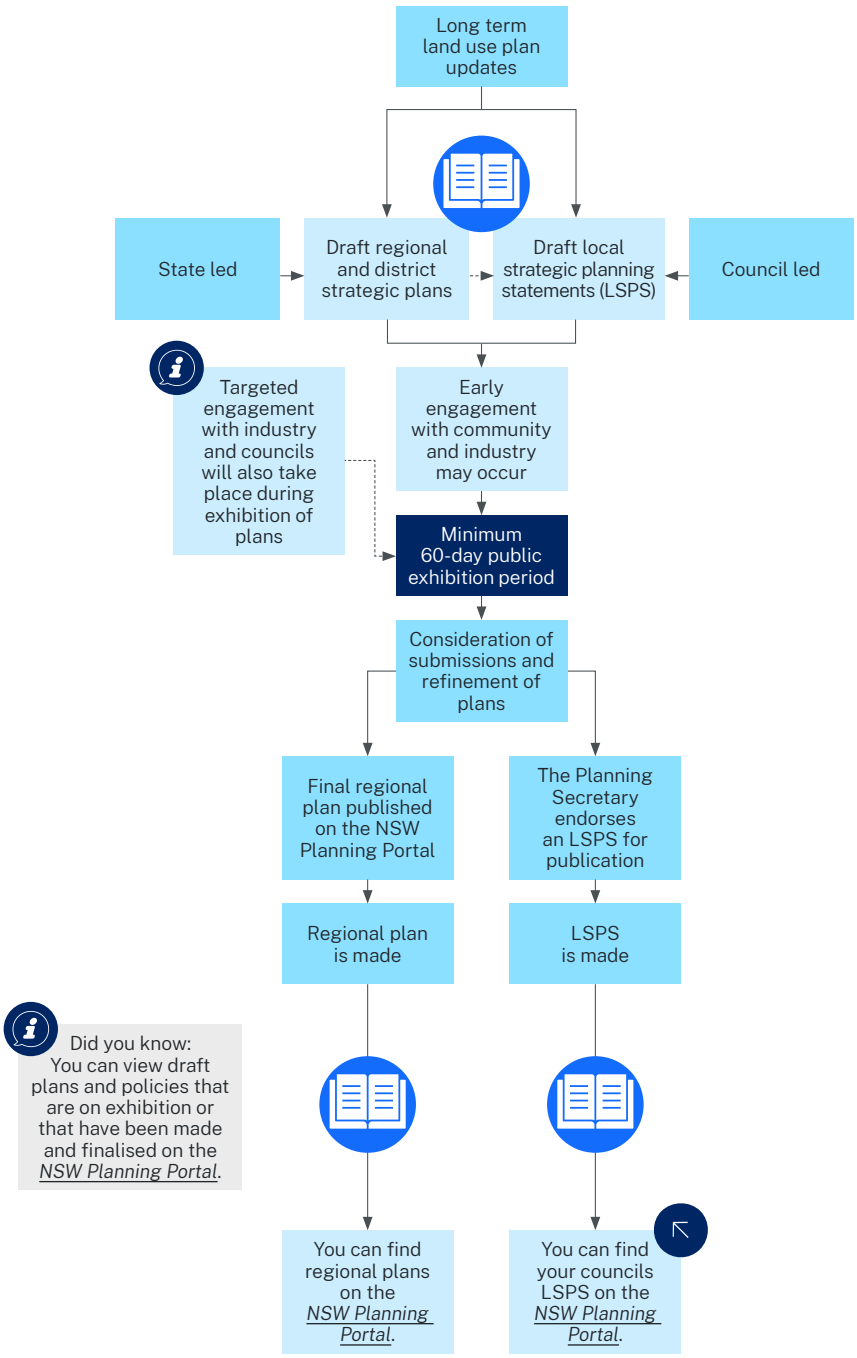
The post has a link to the NSW Planning Portal which has a copy of the draft Sydney Region Plan as well as some simple survey questions to fill out.

Myriam responds to the survey questions and then uses the statewide CPP linked on the NSW Planning Portal, to help her provide a planning focused feedback submission about the draft Sydney Region Plan.

Myriam would like to see more housing near the local train station as she has been renting but wants more opportunities to buy a home in a well connected area.



Figure 4: Exhibition process – Strategic planning



Development assessment

Development that may impact where I live and work

Development assessment functions are undertaken by several planning authorities, including councils, panels, the IPC and State agencies, who make decisions on proposals in accordance with the relevant approval frameworks and planning controls.

Exhibition requirements for development assessment are proportionate to the level of impact a project will produce. During exhibition, the public can see how planning controls translate into buildings and places in their community.

Where a development application requires a more rigorous assessment, and additional consultation requirements set out in legislation or a SEPP, minimum timeframes are generally longer. For example, State significant development applications generally have longer minimum timeframes than local development applications assessed by councils.

You may be invited to lodge a submission on the following:

State significant projects
Exhibited for a minimum of 28 days (a minimum period of 14-day applies in specified circumstances)

Development of a large scale and economic value, environmental sensitivity, or declared significant by the Planning Minister. This includes State significant developments and State significant infrastructure.

Subscribe here to receive email alerts of major projects in your local government area.

For applications that rely on a rezoning exhibited by the Department, the details of the proposed amendments to the relevant planning instrument(s) will be publicly exhibited concurrently with the application.

Regionally significant development
Exhibited for a minimum of 14 days

Certain development applications of large economic value, scale and/or complexity. Regional planning panels are made up of independent experts that decide whether to approve a development.

Did you know: You can view applications on exhibition and under assessment on the NSW Planning Portal.

Local development
Exhibited for a minimum of 14 days

The most common type of development applications in NSW. Projects range from home extensions to medium sized commercial, retail, and industrial developments.

Did you know: You can view exhibited and determined applications using the DA tracker.

Development excluded from notification and public exhibition
No exhibition

Certain development that meets relevant planning controls.

Development types specified in Table 6 will be excluded from exhibition requirements (if they do not include a clause 4.6 variation).

Continued on next page

Council-related development applications
Exhibited for a minimum of 28 days

Councils regularly lodge development applications as an applicant to complete their own projects and achieve outcomes for the community. This includes development such as parks, affordable housing and toilet blocks, as well as commercial proposals.

Where a development application requires a more rigorous assessment, and additional consultation requirements set out in legislation or a SEPP, minimum timeframes are generally longer. For example, state significant development applications have longer minimum timeframes than local development applications assessed by councils.

Development applications with additional considerations
Exhibited for a minimum of 28 days

Did you know: You can view exhibited and determined applications using the DA tracker.

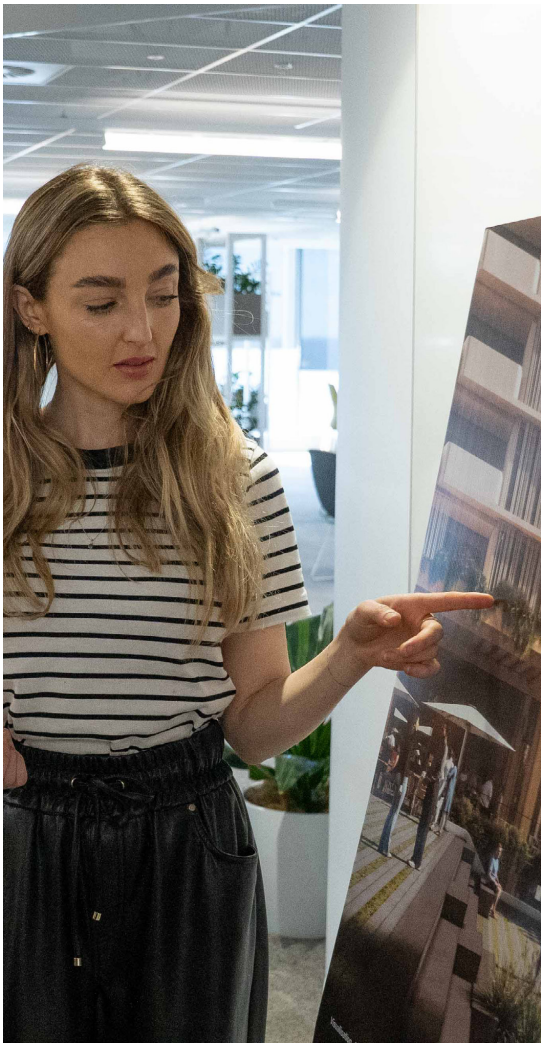
Designated development is a category of development that involves a higher level of assessment and scrutiny due to the potential risk it poses to the environment.

Nominated integrated development is development that requires certain approvals (such as a permit or license) from a NSW Government agency before it can be carried out.

Threatened species development is a category of development that affects threatened species and requires a species impact statement.

An Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) is required if an activity will have a significant impact on the environment. The EIS assesses the economic, environmental and social impacts of a project.





Who is involved in development assessment:

Department

The Department assesses and in some cases determines State significant projects

Councils

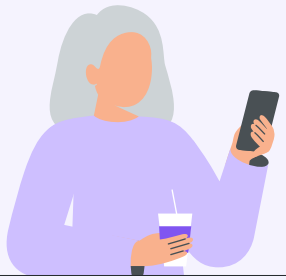
Council assesses local and regionally significant development applications. Council also provides advice on State significant projects

Community

The community provide valuable feedback on projects during public exhibition

Industry

Industry experts provide advice and feedback on projects



Case study

Learning about a solar farm in my local area

There has been a post on a community social media group that a solar farm is proposed near Anne's local town, with many comments objecting to the idea.

This is the first time she's heard of the project and is curious, so she goes online to check if there are any project documents available for her review.

Anne discovers that the energy company is intending to host webinars next week to introduce locals to their proposal. This is suitable for Anne as she has two young children and is glad she can join in from home.

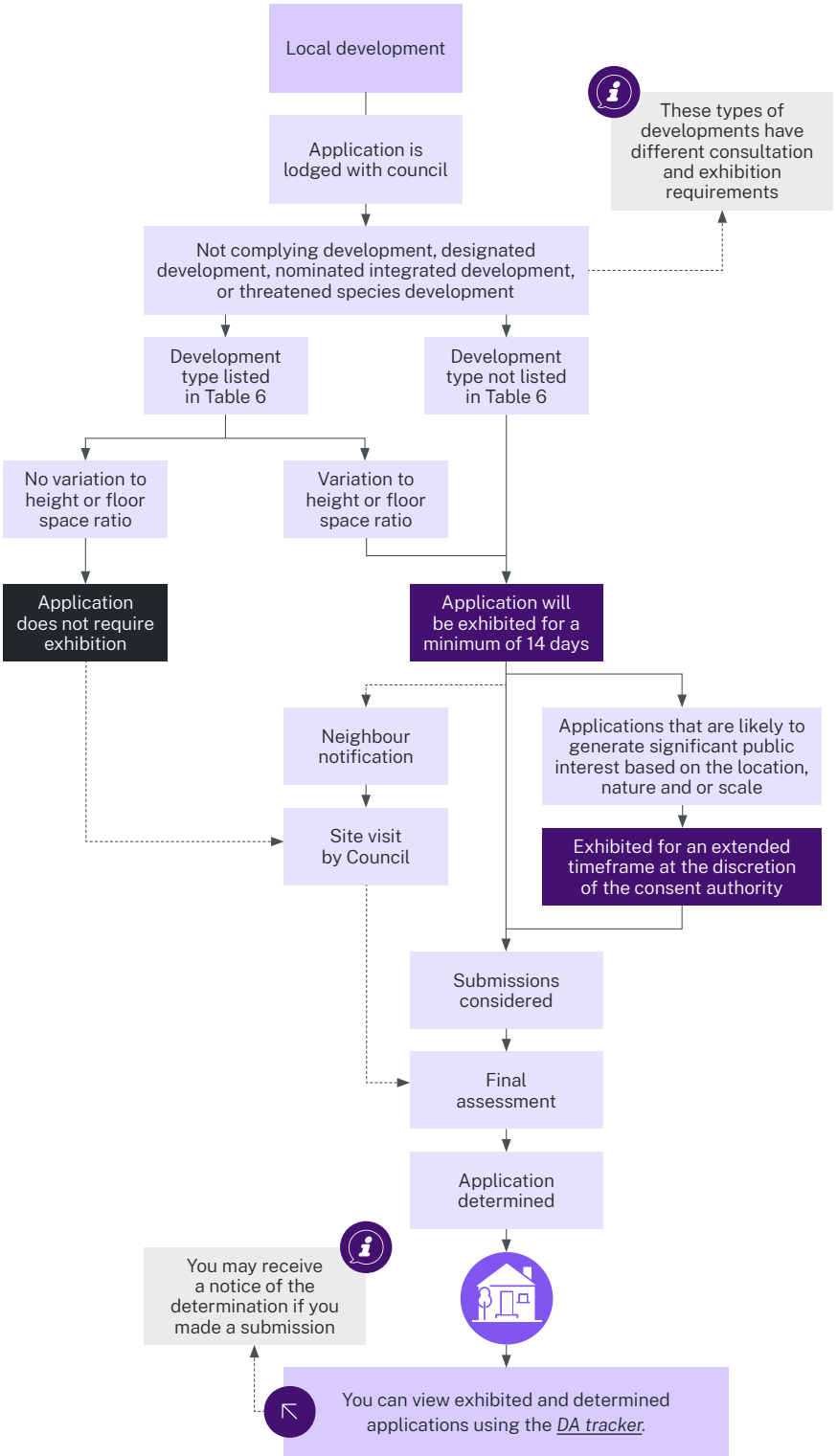
Upon joining the webinar, she discovers that the project is still in early development and a formal application is yet to be lodged.

It is also explained that for larger scale projects, such as renewable energy, the State Government assesses their environmental impact, as they are important to the State.

The community is being engaged as part of preparing the application, and Anne is encouraged to sign up for project updates to find out when the project moves through different stages of the planning process.

Anne will also be able to submit a formal submission when an environmental impact statement is lodged, and the formal exhibition process opens. It is important to be able to do this, as the submissions will be considered by the NSW Government as part of its assessment of the project.

Figure 5: Exhibition process – Local development





Other notice requirements

The following planning functions are subject to different approval pathways under NSW planning legislation and have varying notification requirements, which are not set by the community participation plan.

Some forms of development, such as exempt development, are considered low impact and do not require community notification. Others, such as complying development, voluntary planning agreements and certain development carried out without consent, may involve notification. This depends on statutory requirements or the nature and potential impacts of the proposal.

Table 2: Notice requirements for specific development types

Development type	Description	Notice requirement
Complying development 	Process that combines planning and construction approval for straight forward residential, commercial and industrial development. These provisions are in the State Environmental Planning Policy (Exempt and Complying Development Codes) 2008. Complying development applications are not publicly exhibited as they meet specific development standards established for straight forward, low impact projects. Therefore, there is no opportunity to provide feedback.	For certain development types you will be notified before works commence. Council have a requirement to publish certain documents relating to complying development certificates on their website. Notice provisions are stipulated in the EP&A Regulation. Further information can be found in the Guide to complying development
Exempt development 	Very low impact development that can be done without planning or building approval for certain residential, commercial and industrial properties. These provisions are in the State Environmental Planning Policy (Exempt and Complying Development Codes) 2008.	No applicable notice requirements. Visit the Exempt development web page for fact sheets and further information.
Voluntary planning agreements 	A method of securing contributions to help cover the cost of delivering infrastructure. They are legal agreements between a developer and a planning authority, such as the Minister for Planning and Public Spaces, or local councils.	A proposed agreement, amendment or revocation must be made available for inspection by the public for at least 28 days, as set out in the EP&A Act. Notification of a planning agreement can happen concurrently with the related planning matter.
Development without consent (Review of environmental factors) 	Certain projects undertaken by councils, government departments or State agencies. Before work can start, public authorities are required to assess the environmental impacts of a project.	Notice periods are set out in the relevant environmental planning instruments, and guideline documents.

Public exhibition timeframes

Tables 3, 4, 5 and 6 set out mandatory requirements for public exhibition
Table 6 sets out when certain development types are excluded from public exhibition.

State and local planning framework

Table 3: Public exhibition timeframes for policy and legislation

Planning function	Minimum exhibition timeframe
Draft legislation and regulations (the Department)	Discretionary based on the urgency, scale or nature of the proposal
Policies, guidelines or strategies publicly exhibited for a planning purpose	28 days unless decided otherwise due to the urgency, scale and nature of the proposal

Additionally, the Department may exhibit other proposals consistent with community participation objectives. For these functions, there may also be occasions where a government priority or administrative requirement demands immediate action, and the usual community participation process may be truncated.

Strategic planning

Table 4: Public exhibition timeframes for strategic planning

Planning function	Minimum exhibition timeframe
Draft community participation plan	28 days[1]
Planning proposals for local environmental plans subject to a gateway determination*	28 days or as specified by the gateway determination which may determine, due to the minor nature of the proposal, that no public exhibition is required[2]
Draft development control plan	28 days[3]
Draft contribution plans	28 days[4]
Draft local strategic planning statements	60 days
Draft regional or district strategic plans	60 days
Draft activation precinct masterplans and delivery plans (including infrastructure delivery plans)	28 days[5]
Structure plans, precinct plans and masterplans for urban renewal areas	42 days unless decided otherwise due to the urgency, scale and nature of the proposal

* Exhibition of planning proposals must also be carried out in accordance with the Department's Local Environmental Plan Making Guideline.

[1] EP&A Act, Schedule 1, clause 1.
[2] EP&A Act, Schedule 1, clause 4.
[3] EP&A Act, Schedule 1, clause 5.
[4] EP&A Act, Schedule 1, clause 6.
[5] State Environmental Planning Policy (Precincts—Regional) 2021, sections 3.6(6), 3.7(6).

Development assessment

Table 5: Public exhibition timeframes for development applications

Planning function	Minimum exhibition timeframe[6]
Application for development consent. Exclusions: a) complying development, b) designated development, c) nominated integrated development, d) threatened species development, e) State significant development, and f) targeted assessment g) development listed in Table 6	14 days
Application for consent for the following State significant development: • Housing development carried out by or on behalf of the Aboriginal Housing Office or the Land and Housing Corporation under the *Planning Systems SEPP, Schedule 1, section 26* • In-fill affordable housing under the *Planning Systems SEPP, Schedule 1, section 26A* • Build-to-rent housing under the *Planning Systems SEPP, Schedule 1, section 27* • Seniors housing under the *Planning Systems SEPP, Schedule 1, section 28* • Development in accelerated TOD precincts under the *Planning Systems SEPP, Schedule 2, section 19* • Development declared under the *EP&A Act, section 4.36(3)*. Including on the recommendation of the Housing Delivery Authority	14 days
Application for development consent for targeted assessment development, including any amended application under the pathway	14 days, unless a different period is specified in a State environmental planning policy[7]
Application for modification of development consent required to be publicly exhibited by the regulations	14 days[8]
Application for the review of a determination or decision of a consent authority (Division 8.2 review)	The same period as the development application or modification application was originally notified or advertised
Application for development consent for all other State significant development	28 days
Application for development consent for designated development	28 days
Environmental impact statement for State significant infrastructure under Division 5.2	28 days
Application for development consent for nominated integrated development or threatened species development	28 days
Application for development consent for category 1 remediation work under Chapter 4 of SEPP (Resilience and Hazards) 2021	28 days
Environmental impact statement obtained under Division 5.1	28 days
Council-related development applications	28 days
Re-exhibition of any amended application or matter	The period (if any) determined by the person or body responsible for publicly exhibiting the application or matter

[6] Development applications that are likely to generate significant public interest based on the location, nature and or scale may be exhibited for an extended timeframe at the discretion of the consent authority.
[7] EP&A Act, Schedule 1, clause 9C.
[8] Excluding applications to modify a development consent made under section 4.55(2) specified in Table 6.

Development types excluded from public exhibition

Applications for development consent listed in Table 6 (other than applications for complying development certificates, designated development, nominated integrated development, threatened species development or for State significant development), are excluded from public exhibition, where the development:

- Does not require a variation to height of building or floor space ratio, under clause 4.6 of the Standard Instrument LEP (or an equivalent provision of any other environmental planning instrument).

Table 6: Development types excluded from public exhibition

Development types excluded from public exhibition[9]
• Ancillary development to existing residential accommodation (such as but not limited to pools, sheds, pergolas and carports) • Bed and breakfast accommodation • Change of use (excluding a change of use to a registered club or pub, and excluding any development that adjoins, or is located on, land in a residential zone) • Demolition • Dual occupancy (up to two storeys) • Attached dwelling (up to 5 dwellings) • Dwelling house (up to two storeys) • Multi dwelling housing (up to 5 dwellings) • Secondary dwelling • Exhibition home • Extensive agriculture • Farm building • Home business • Home industry • Home occupation • Industrial retail outlet • Infrastructure facility in the Alpine region[10] • Internal and external alterations and additions (excluding residential accommodation) • Internal and external alterations and additions to existing residential accommodation resulting in no more than two storeys • Kiosk • Repair and maintenance of recreation infrastructure, lifting facility, or snow-making infrastructure in the Alpine region • Roadside stall • Rural worker's dwelling • Signage (excluding where it adjoins or is in a residential zone) • Subdivision of land resulting in no more than 5 new lots • Subdivision of land that is subject to an existing development consent for its current use. • Temporary structure • Tree removal on private land • Applications to modify a development consent made under section 4.55(1) of the EP&A Act • Applications to modify a development consent made under section 4.55(1A) of the EP&A Act • Applications to modify a development consent made under section 4.56(1) of the EP&A Act with minimal environmental impact • Applications to modify a development consent made under section 4.55(2) of the EP&A Act where the development the subject of the consent is specified in this Table

[9] Where a word or expression used in the Table is defined in the Dictionary to the standard instrument set out in the *Standard Instrument (Local Environmental Plans) Order 2006*, that definition applies to the word or expression as used in the Table.
[10] As defined in Schedule 4A to *State Environmental Planning Policy (Precincts—Regional) 2021.*

Key points to note about public exhibition

- Timeframes are measured in calendar days and include weekends.
- The period between 20 December and 10 January (inclusive) is excluded from the calculation of a period of public exhibition period as outlined in Schedule 1 to the EP&A Act.
- In certain circumstances there may be merit appeal rights for a person who makes a submission to object during the public exhibition of a development application for designated development and some state significant development projects.
- Public authorities are not required to make available for inspection any part of an environmental impact statement where this publication would, in the opinion of the public authority, be contrary to the public interest due to its confidential nature or for other reasons defined in relevant legislation, such as the Government Information (Public Access) Act 2009.
- Sections 287 and 287A of the EP&A Regulation require submissions on State significant projects and other development applications where the Minister for Planning and Public Spaces, Planning Secretary or Independent Planning Commission is the consent authority, to be made through the NSW Planning Portal.
- The safety of community members, other stakeholders and staff must be considered during meetings, phone calls, and as part of any correspondence. Everyone has the right to participate in a respectful environment and are expected to behave in a manner that supports everyone's right to present their point of view.

Glossary

Planning terms and definitions	
Alpine region	Means the Alpine Region identified on the State Environmental Planning Policy (Precincts—Regional) 2021, Kosciuszko Alpine Region Land Application Map
Activation precinct	A dedicated area within regional New South Wales which has been identified by the NSW Government to drive regional economic development and declared to be an Activation Precinct in a Schedule made under Chapter 3 of the State Environmental Planning Policy (Precincts—Regional) 2021
Community Participation Plan	The community participation plan prepared and published under Division 2.6 of the EP&A Act
Contribution plans	A plan developed by councils for the purposes of imposing conditions requiring local infrastructure contributions to fund new and upgraded public amenities and/or services required to accommodate development
Council-related development applications	A development application, for which a council is the consent authority, that is— (a) made by or on behalf of the council, or (b) for development on land, other than a public road within the meaning of the *Local Government Act 1993*— (i) of which the council is an owner, a lessee or a licensee, or (ii) otherwise vested in or under the control of the council **Note—** Land vested in or under the control of the council includes public land within the meaning of the *Local Government Act 1993*
Delivery plan	A delivery plan for an activation precinct means a delivery plan for the precinct that is approved by the Planning Secretary under section 3.7 of Chapter 3 of the State Environmental Planning Policy (Precincts—Regional) 2021
Designated development	Designated development refers to high-impact developments (e.g. likely to generate pollution) or those located in or near an environmentally sensitive area
Development control plans (DCP)	A plan providing detailed planning and design guidelines to support LEP planning controls
Environmental impact statement (EIS)	An EIS provides information on the economic, environmental, and social impacts of the project. It helps the community; government agencies and the consent authority make informed submissions or decisions on the project
Gateway determination	A gateway determination is issued following an assessment of the strategic merit of a proposal to amend or create an LEP and allows for the proposal to proceed to public exhibition
Local environmental plan (LEP)	An environmental planning instrument developed by a planning proposal authority, generally a council. An LEP sets the planning framework for a Local Government Area

Planning terms and definitions	
Nominated integrated development	Integrated development that requires an approval (within the meaning of section 4.45) under — (a) a provision of the *Heritage Act 1977* specified in section 4.46(1), or (b) a provision of the *Water Management Act 2000* specified in section 4.46(1), or (c) a provision of the Protection of the Environment Operations Act 1997 specified in section 4.46(1)
Regional strategic plan	20-year plans addressing community needs for housing, jobs, infrastructure and a healthy environment for a region
Residential zone	Land in *R1 General Residential, R2 Low Density Residential, R3 Medium Density Residential, R4 High Density Residential or R5 Large Lot Residential under a local environmental plan that adopts the standard instrument set out at the end of the Standard Instrument (Local Environmental Plans) Order 2006 (or land in an equivalent land use zone, as that term is defined under clause 5 of State Environmental Planning Policy (Housing) 2021)*
State environmental planning policy (SEPP)	An environmental planning instrument developed by the Department, relating to State significant or statewide planning matters
State significant development (SSD)	Development that is declared to be state significant development under section 4.36 of the EP&A Act Developments may be declared to have State significance due to their size, location, economic value or potential impacts, for example new non-government schools and hospitals and energy generating facilities
State significant infrastructure (SSI)	Development that is declared to be state significant infrastructure under section 5.12 of the EP&A Act SSI includes major transport and services developments with significance and impact beyond the local area, for example rail infrastructure, road infrastructure and water storage or treatment facilities
Threatened species development	Development to which section 7.7(2) of the *Biodiversity Conservation Act 2016* or section 221ZW of the *Fisheries Management Act 1994* applies
Urban renewal area	• Areas identified as having good access to existing or planned public transport connections, suitable for rejuvenation with new homes and jobs • State significant precincts which are large areas of predominantly State-owned land within Greater Sydney, identified by the NSW Government as areas for growth because of their social, economic or environmental characteristics

Where can I find out more?

Planning function	Link
Acts, Regulations and SEPPs	Draft plans and policies on exhibition and under consideration can be found here: www.planningportal.nsw.gov.au/have-your-say-
Strategic planning	Regional plans can be found here: www.planning.nsw.gov.au/plans-in-nsw/plans-by-region Local Strategic Planning Statements can be found here: www.planningportal.nsw.gov.au/local-strategic-planning-statements Contribution plans can be found here: www.planningportal.nsw.gov.au/infrastructure-contributions Planning Proposals on exhibition can be found here: www.planningportal.nsw.gov.au/ppr
State significant projects	Subscribe to receive email alerts for Major Projects here: www.planningportal.nsw.gov.au/major-projects/services/subscribe-notifications Track applications on exhibited here: www.planningportal.nsw.gov.au/major-projects/projects?status=Exhibition&lga=All&development_type=All&industry_type=All&case_type=All
Regional planning panels	View applications with the Regional Planning Panels here: www.planningportal.nsw.gov.au/planning-panel
Development assessment	View councils' DA trackers here: www.planningportal.nsw.gov.au/map/council-trackers
Complying development	View the guide to complying development here: www.planning.nsw.gov.au/sites/default/files/2023-02/guide-to-complying-development.pdf
Exempt development	Find more information on exempt development here: www.planning.nsw.gov.au/the-planning-system/development-assessment/planning-approval-pathways/exempt-development



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