

State of our Municipality 2021–24



INTERACTIVE NAVIGATION



Overview

We belong and contribute



We thrive in a sustainable environment



We create a strong and diverse economy



We are part of a connected and liveable community



We expect accountable and transparent leadership ...



CEO message – looking ahead



KIAMA MUNICIPAL COUNCIL
your council, your community

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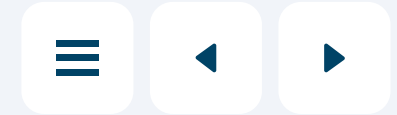
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Acknowledgement of Country






Kiama Municipal Council acknowledges the Wodi Wodi people on Dharawal country as the traditional custodians of the land on which our Municipality is located. We pay our respects to Elders past, present and future. We are committed to honouring Australian Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples' unique cultural and spiritual relationships to the land, waters and seas and their rich contribution to our community.



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Mayor's introduction

I am pleased to present this end of term State of our Municipality 2021–2024 report to the Kiama community.

While this was a shorter term of council than usual due to the global pandemic, it has certainly not been an uneventful one.



Neil Reilly, Mayor of Kiama

Council elections were held in December 2021, with the newly elected Councillors inducted in January 2022. Less than a month later, the CEO presented Councillors with her 'State of the Organisation' report, which noted core challenges for the organisation in respect to financial sustainability, organisational capability, culture and performance, and risk and governance. This report set the tone for the Council term.

My fellow Councillors and I were in for a challenging ride, as information came to light about issues affecting the organisation. These challenges, many of them years, and in some cases decades in the making, were diligently worked through during the 2021-24 term of Council and I commend my fellow Councillors, Council staff and our community for working alongside us as we tackled the issues and made difficult but crucial decisions.

In the meantime, we faced other challenges too. The tail end of the COVID pandemic has had ongoing affects on businesses, governments and society. Weather events including flooding and heavy rains affected our area. Of particular note, one of our main arterial roads, Jamberoo Mountain Road, was closed for a period of 12 months. Road repairs are an ongoing challenge in a regional area such as ours.

On a lighter note, we also celebrated with some fantastic events. Our NYE Skyshow returned post-COVID bigger and better than ever, the Jamberoo Jam, Kiama Street Soiree and annual Winter Festival

have all proved popular with locals and visitors, as have the fantastic reader, author and book-themed events put on by our Libraries.

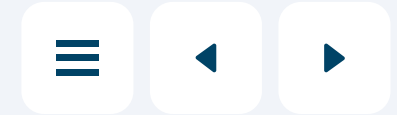
Meanwhile our premier events venue The Pavilion and our Holiday Parks continue to thrive and attract visitors to the area. Our Leisure Centre has provided water safety and swim lessons to thousands of local children year on year. The municipality's parks and gardens provide a range of play and recreation opportunities, and we're regularly praised for our stunning floral displays.

It comes as no surprise that, given all of the above, Kiama won the NSW Top Tourism Town of the year in 2024. The award recognises much hard work from many sectors and Kiama Council was justifiably honoured by this accolade.






As I complete my term as Mayor and my 17 years as a Kiama Councillor this year, I can only be proud and impressed by all that we've achieved. While we have not been perfect, a wise mantra of leadership is to "leave things better than you found them" and I can honestly say that this term of Council has done that.

Neil Reilly
Mayor of Kiama 2021–2024

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Vision, mission, values

Community vision

Working together for a healthy, sustainable, and caring community.



Council mission

Kiama Council will work to create a municipality that has a healthy, vibrant lifestyle beautiful environment and harmonious, connected and resilient community.



Council values



Respect

We treat others as we expect to be treated – in a fair and professional manner



Innovation

We champion change in order to provide superior services to our community



Integrity

We are open, honest, and ethical in our behaviours – at all times



Teamwork

We are one team – working together with trust and commitment to achieve and share goals



Excellence

We aspire to be the best in everything we do

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About this report

The State of our Municipality report covers the term of the previous Council (December 2021 to August 2024) and objectively tracks council's progress against our Community Strategic Plan (CSP).

This report provides information that sets the scene for the new Council, including achievements to date. It also serves to highlight future work to be undertaken.

This report is designed to assist the new Council to undertake a review of the CSP, which is an essential component of Integrated Planning and Reporting (IP&R) cycle.



Our CSP 2022-2032 is divided into five pillars, stating that:



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We expect accountable and transparent leadership; a financially sustainable Council

The report shows the community's progress towards (or away from) its stated goals and aspirations as identified in the CSP.

The report reiterates the key outcomes Council identified under each pillar, and provides a snapshot of some of Council's main achievements, projects undertaken and progress made by different departments and areas of Council. These snapshots demonstrate the breadth and depth of work undertaken by Council in this shorter term (2 years, 9 months, versus a usual 4-year term).

The report provides valuable status information on key community objectives and the utility of the strategies which were identified to address them.

Council is currently operating under a NSW-Government Imposed Performance Improvement Order (PIO), and Council has identified eight (8) strategic levers to help get to where we need to be and guide Council's direction over the following two to three years to achieve financial sustainability. Read more about this on page 13 under the foundations of financial stability.

The State of our Municipality report is presented to the second meeting of a newly elected council for noting. The quotes throughout this report were supplied by the Councillors who served as Kiama's elected representatives during this term of 2021-24.

"Moving forward, it is important that the new and future councils focus on core financial sustainability and complete the State Government's performance improvement order on council. I would also advise all new Councillors; you are elected to make decisions based on what you believe is the best interest of the community, so trust in your own judgement. Please be kind, persevere and be brave."

Cr Stuart Larkins



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CEO message – looking ahead

Our councillors

Councillors in alphabetical order of surname



Councillor Matt Brown

I was raised in Kiama and I am a former Captain of Kiama High School.

I have been a corporate lawyer, business operator and employer, and a local Member of Parliament.

I have a proven record of success in negotiating, lobbying and securing grants and infrastructure for the local community.

I also have extensive experience in public administration.

I will continue to ensure that Kiama Council is 'Fit for the Future' to avoid any possibility of future amalgamation.

I am committed to improving the lifestyle of all residents, and the improvement of our Leisure Centre, recreation facilities and retirement villages.



Councillor Mark Croxford

I am a semi-retired corporate and public affairs consultant from Kiama Downs.

I am a volunteer within Kiama's LGA, including with our Combined Community Advocacy Group, North Precinct and Kiama High School P&C.

I am a 20-year navy veteran with operational service in Bosnia-Herzegovina as well as a former senior ministerial adviser in the Howard government.

I'm also an advocate on mental health matters, particularly for veterans. I am married to Cath and a father of four.

It is no secret I am a member of the Liberal Party of Australia, however I strongly oppose the involvement of political parties in local government.



Councillor Imogen Draisma (Deputy Mayor)

I have lived in the Kiama area since a young age, attending Kiama and Minnamurra public schools.

I completed my school education at Wollongong High School of the Performing Arts and am currently completing a double degree, Bachelor of Arts/ Bachelor of Laws at the University of Wollongong.

During my university studies, I have been a student activist with a particular interest in student safety on campus, directing my attention to ensure that the pandemic-impacted university provides the services and supports that the student community needs.


I have worked for members of the NSW and Australian parliaments.


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Our councillors (continued)



Councillor Jodi Keast

I am a Certified Practising Accountant with a Masters degree in Business Administration and significant experience as an executive manager in governance, financial, strategic, risk and business continuity management.

I bring my board director experience with Grand Pacific Health, a non-profit organisation that delivers mental health services (e.g. Headspace), preventative health and Aboriginal health services, to my role as a councillor.

I am connected to the community through my work at the Kiama Community College, membership of local sporting clubs, volunteer work, as well as my family's strong involvement in local sporting, cultural, health and volunteer activities.



Councillor Stuart Larkins

I have grown up and lived in the Kiama area my entire life.

I have a long family heritage connected to Kiama and the South Coast of NSW.

I went to Minnamurra Primary School and Kiama High School.

I have completed a double degree in Law and Arts (Politics/Indigenous Studies) at the University of Wollongong and I also have a graduate diploma in legal practice from the Australian National University.

I have been involved in a number of our local volunteer groups.

What drives me is a passion to help people and I will always advocate for those that need it most.



Councillor Neil Reilly (Mayor)

I have represented the Kiama community as a councillor since 2008, including a year as deputy mayor.

My career has been in the field of advertising and marketing, I also served with the Australian Defence Force.

Although retired, I consider being a councillor my job. I am married to Wendy and we have three adult children.

My role in the community is an exceptional opportunity. I work in the best place on earth with its best people.

Council should be seeking outcomes that give us shared benefits and impose shared responsibilities.

There are joys, challenges and critical thinking, I love it.

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Our councillors (continued)



Councillor Karen Renkema-Lang

I am committed to protecting the most precious assets in our municipality now and for future generations; the distinctive qualities and inclusive and friendly culture of our towns and villages; our farmlands, waterways, and beaches; and our flora, fauna, and wildlife corridors.

I have demonstrated this commitment by volunteering on Council committees, Kiama Central Precinct, and Kiama Community Radio.

I have an extensive background in IT and communications serving in the Royal Australian Navy and then working for the Australian Government.

My qualifications include a Bachelor of Information Technology and a Masters of Science (earth and environmental science).



Councillor Kathy Rice

I am motivated by a passion for community engagement in governance and have been an active and engaged Councillor since 2012.

I have worked in the community for most of my life and developed a rich experience of how participation can change lives.

I have striven to represent those views that arise most commonly in community consultations and submissions.

I respect the community's role in shaping local development controls that when followed, stabilise the uncertainty of planning outcomes and contribute towards environmental sustainability.

I want to help Kiama develop in ways that we most value whilst protecting those features that we most love.



Councillor Warren Steel

Since selling papers on the trams of Kingsford in the 50's I have had a long career developing businesses with a flair for the creative.

I have worked as an electrician, in sports, printing and real estate. I've also managed several businesses including a timber yard, brickworks, and a regional bank.

I was CEO of the Wollongong Chamber of Commerce for 10 years, championing the small business community and advocating for representation in local government.

I received a Lions Club award for 55 years of membership and services to the community, and an Outstanding Service Award from the Office of Local Government.

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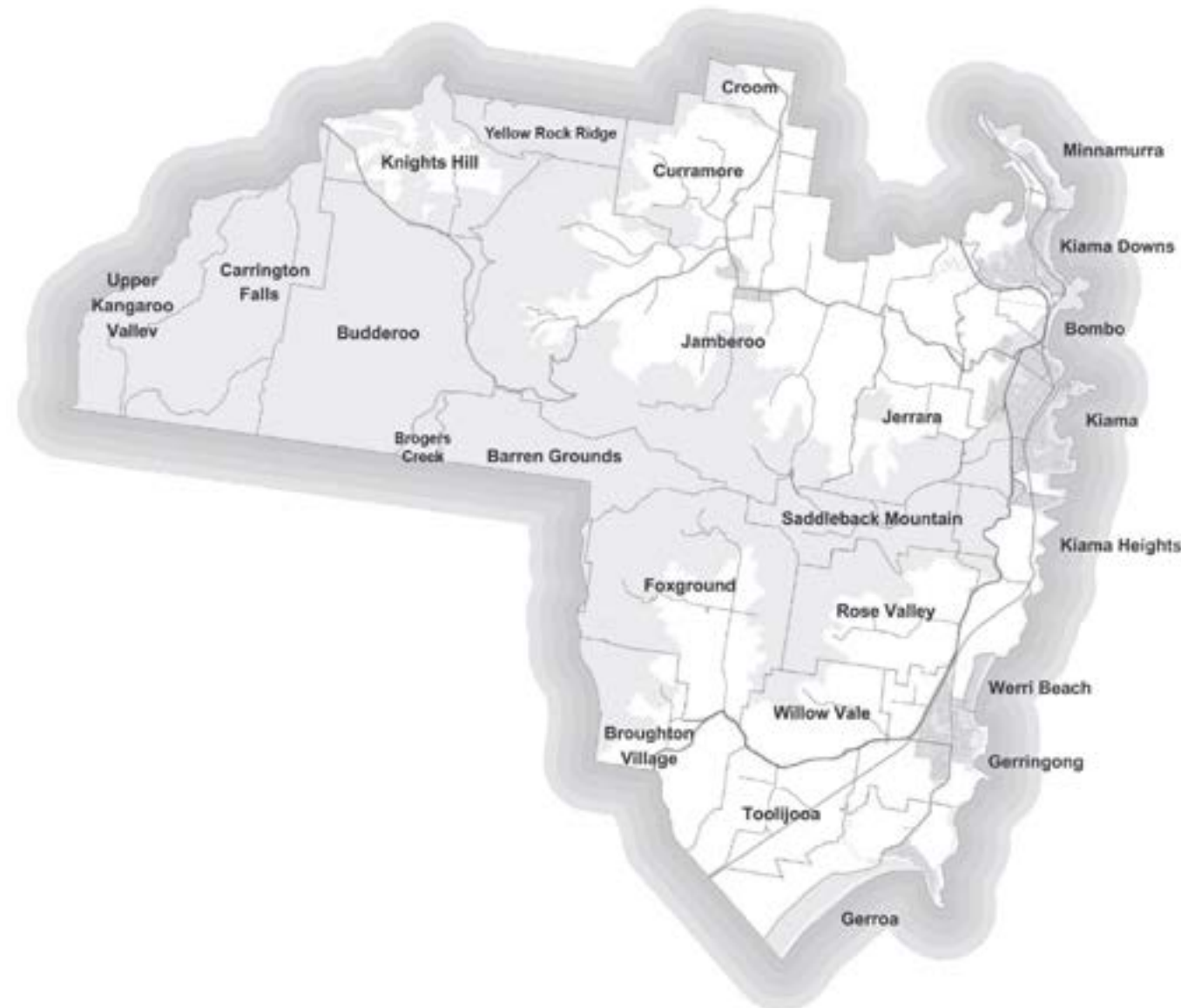
CEO message – looking ahead

Our municipality

The Municipality of Kiama is located on the south coast of New South Wales in the Illawarra Region, Kiama is close to the major regional centres of Wollongong and Nowra and is an accessible 120km south of Sydney.

Our landscapes are diverse and include beaches, rainforests, escarpments, mountains and rural areas. The Local Government Area (LGA) is made up of six main towns, each with its own individual character.






The Kiama area has a strong sense of community and locals take pride in their LGA. Kiama Council works hard to create and maintain a municipality with a healthy, vibrant, beautiful environment and a harmonious, connected and resilient community.



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The Integrated Planning and Reporting framework

Councils throughout NSW are required to prepare Integrated Plans which include the 10-year Community Strategic Plan (CSP); the four-year Delivery Program (DP) and the annual Operational Plan (OP).

In 2022, Council adopted its 2022-2032 Community Strategic Plan, which forms the first layer of the Integrated Planning and Reporting framework. It identifies our community's vision and objectives for a 10-year period and identifies strategies to work towards achieving these long term objectives. The CSP addresses social, environmental, economic and civic leadership issues in an integrated manner.

Also in 2022, the newly elected Council established our Delivery Program 2022-2026 which focused on the specific actions to work towards achieving the objectives of the longer term CSP. Supporting the DP each year, Council established the annual OP to detail the activities and services that will be carried out during the following year.

During this term, Council chose to combine the DP and the OP into one document to guide us towards meeting our community's needs and demands for services, facilities and infrastructure.

Combining these two plans allowed us to show a clear link between how the long-term objectives and strategies of our CSP are translated into activities and specific actions.

The OP also contains Council's detailed annual budget and Revenue Policy, including proposed rates, fees and charges. The diagram, right, shows how the various levels of the planning framework connect.

All our plans have been developed with consideration to the four key areas of Community, Environment, Economy and Civic Leadership and are based on the social justice principles of:

Equity – There should be fairness in decision making, prioritising and allocation of resources, particularly for those in need. Everyone should have fair opportunity to participate in the future of the community.

The planning process should take particular care to involve and protect the interest of people in vulnerable circumstances.

Access – All people should have fair access to services, resources and opportunities to improve their quality of life.

Participation – Everyone should have the maximum opportunity to genuinely participate in decisions that affect their lives.

Rights – Equal rights should be established and promoted, with opportunities provided for people from diverse linguistic, cultural and religious backgrounds to participate in community life.

Planning framework

3 months

Quarterly Operational Plan Review

Every three months we will report on the progress made on the activities identified in the annual Operational Plan (Outputs).

6 months

Biannual Delivery Program Review

Every six months we will report on the progress made in implementing the actions identified in the Delivery Program (Outcomes).

12 months

Annual Report

Every 12 months we will focus on our progress in implementing the Delivery Program and Operational Plan, as these plans are wholly Council's responsibility.

4 years

State of our Municipality Report

Every four years the outgoing Council reports on the achievements in implementing the Community Strategic Plan over their previous term in office. This report was formerly known as the End of Term Report. The 2016-21 report covers five years as local government elections were postponed due to COVID).



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CEO message – looking ahead

The foundations of financial stability

During the 2023-24 financial year, we planned the foundations of financial stability. This underpinning enabled our organisation to successfully navigate a challenging financial, political, and structural year. We also completed not one, but three sets of financial statements in a 12-month period.

While Council will record an operating deficit of \$5.4 million in 2024-25 (excluding capital grants and assets sales), we are now forecast to improve to an operating deficit of \$2.7 million in 2025-26 before returning an operating surplus of \$700,000 in 2026-27.

When you consider our budget deficit in 2019-20 was \$8.1 million, we've managed to realise an improvement in the order of 35% in our bottom line.

"Kiama Council is no longer in a position where efficiencies and savings are the answer. Where we go next will require political decisions from our incoming Councillors" said Jane Stroud Chief Executive Officer of Kiama Council.

"The most important of these will be deciding our core business as a council, following the review of our essential and non-essential services, which is already underway."






"However, the sale of assets alone is not the answer. We will need to focus on what we have to deliver for our community versus what is nice to do."

With this in mind we have developed the newly endorsed Strategic Finance and Governance Improvement Plan (Improvement Plan), which is critical to the work we need to do over the next three years as we work towards a surplus budget in 2026-27 that does not rely on asset sales year on year.

The Improvement Plan sets out what financial sustainability looks like for Kiama Council, and eight 'levers' for achieving it by 2026-27:

- 1 Sustainable cash reserves & responsible borrowing
- 2 Optimised revenue opportunities
- 3 Well planned assets
- 4 Reviewed and efficient service landscape
- 5 Investment in transformation
- 6 Robust financial management
- 7 Prioritising advocacy and partnerships
- 8 Ensure good governance



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CSP outcomes – how did we do?

Each Pillar lists Pillar Outcomes, which are the goals Council and the community together have identified that we want to achieve. The CSP lists **Strategies**, which are how we will achieve the outcomes, **Partners**, the people, organisations and other stakeholders who will help us achieve the outcomes and **Community Indicators**, which include measurements for the outcomes.

Below, we have tabled each Pillar Outcome with a short summary of how each has been achieved and/or if there is still work to carry over into the upcoming term of Council.

Each section also includes a few briefs on Council projects, business areas, achievements and strategic goals that relate to that Pillar (although much of Council's work is relevant across several and sometimes all five pillars). Altogether this provides a comprehensive overview of Council's achievements during this term, and offers a good basis for the incoming council to set priorities for their term (in line with the parameters of Kiama Council's NSW Government-issued Performance Improvement Order).






This information in this report, alongside other key documents such as our Strategic Finance and Government Improvement Plan, will assist our incoming Council to revise the CSP and set desired outcomes for the next ten years.

"Our council has come through what I have called an 'existential problem'. That is, a problem that left unanswered by positive action would mean that our council, which was established over 165 years ago, would cease to exist. The actions [outlined in the State of our Municipality Report] collectively represent a comprehensive effort by Kiama Council to address its difficulties and work towards a more sustainable future."

Mayor Neil Reilly



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Pillar 1

We belong and contribute



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Pillar 1: We belong and contribute

Pillar 1 Outcomes	Measures	Achieved	Pillar 1 Outcomes	Measures	Achieved
We want a strong sense of community and belonging, where social and cultural life can flourish; and our families, friends and visitors feel welcome and included.	<p>We have maintained our Socio-Economic Index for Areas SEIFA score of 1,061 (previously 1,056) in quintile 5, percentile 90 (2023 results).</p> <p>Kiama Council has not completed a community satisfaction survey since 2020 but plans to undertake one in early 2025.</p> <p>No new data available for volunteer numbers.</p> <p>Our events continue to be attended by a 70:30 ratio of locals: visitors.</p> <p>Our Libraries continue to produce annual reports.</p> <p>Council continues to support a range of diverse events and activities targeted at different demographics. These continue to be delivered for both general and specific purposes.</p> <p>Council has developed in collaboration with our young people, a range of new and existing partnerships and activities, as evidenced by our work at SENTRAL youth services, and our work in the careers and community engagement space with local preschools, primary and high schools.</p>	● Yes	We love where we live; we have the services and facilities we need, and the natural beauty of our surroundings enhances our active and healthy lifestyle.	<p>Council continues to provide facilities that enable the community to participate in social, cultural, recreational and sports activities. Our SEIFA score has been maintained (see left).</p> <p>Kiama scores 96.6 in the Australian Urban Observatory Liveability index for key workers map.auo.org.au.</p> <p>In terms of looking after each other in times of disaster, Council has spent time, effort and resources in disaster recovery work during this term, including qualifying for declared natural disaster funding from State and Federal governments for road repair, beach and debris clean ups and green waste collection.</p> <p>Council produced a community poster to raise awareness of domestic and gender-based violence which was displayed in Council premises and made available to local businesses.</p> <p>Council has worked in conjunction with local area health services to provide locations for mobile health vans to set up, the annual 'Health Moves' program and seniors health activities.</p>	● Yes

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Pillar 1: We belong and contribute

(continued)

Pillar 1 Outcomes	Measures	Achieved
Our heritage matters; we want to learn, preserve and share both the Aboriginal history of this area, and the history since settlement.	<p>Work has commenced on Council's first Reconciliation Action Plan (RAP), which is being developed in close consultation with our local Aboriginal community. The RAP can incorporate the development of a Cultural sites index.</p> <p>Council has incorporated Aboriginal cultural elements into its civic events, as well as hosting an annual Sorry Day ceremony and the Local Government Regional NAIDOC awards for the Illawarra.</p> <p>Council has updated its Heritage Review program in this term, with more work scheduled. Number of applications/ outcomes is not something that is available as a separate index. The Heritage Items Register is already included in LEP and State Heritage Register.</p> <p>Council provides regular advice and guidance on heritage buildings and local areas of cultural significance.</p> <p>Council's Libraries provide Family History Centres that allow people to explore local heritage (mostly post-Colonial information available).</p>	<p>● Yes</p>

"As a reflection on this term of council, it has been without a doubt, a challenge. I believe as part of my achievements for the Kiama Municipality, I have advocated for and ensured that we have developed; a new Disability Inclusion Action Plan, a Dog Friendly Spaces Strategy with key progress towards our first ever fenced dog park and establishing new heritage conservation areas for the Kiama town centre. I am proud to have served on the local traffic committee since 2022 and assisted with future plans and strategies for parking and traffic management across our local area."

Cr Stuart Larkins



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CEO message – looking ahead

Pillar 1: We belong and contribute (continued)



Community Hubs

Council has a network of six community halls, distributed across the municipality, which comprise of older style and single purpose facilities.

An assessment of Council halls, including their current asset condition and utilisation status were undertaken which identified a number of gaps and opportunities for improvement. Key areas for consideration were found to be; the underutilisation, maintenance status and the absence of a long-term vision for the assets. A number of recommendations and options have been put into place to increase activation, renewal, management and operations.

A marketing strategy was implemented to promote the facilities and community halls are included in Council's new online booking system as of June 2024. A two-year activation plan will be developed in 24-25 financial year.

Council's new Disability Inclusion Action Plan (DIAP) includes actions to improve accessibility and increase utilisation of community facilities.

Kiama Lifeguard Service

During the past four years there have been no recorded drownings in the flagged areas in the LGA, which goes to show having paid lifeguard services is of immense value for our community.

Council's Supervising Lifeguard helped with the introduction of Emergency Response Beacons (ERBs) for unpatrolled black spot areas in the LGA, to alert lifeguards to people in distress.

In the two years of the ERBs being in place, more 15 people have been rescued as a result of their use.

Council has also formed an unofficial exchange program with the RNLI Lifeguard service, where local lifeguards get to travel abroad and develop their skills on busy Cornish beaches and we in turn host lifeguards from Cornwall to work on our wonderful beaches.



We have fostered very good relationships with the local Surf Lifesaving Clubs through SAR training exercises, support in patrols and beach safety talks with the nippers. This hopefully encourages the young kids to progress from nippers through to paid professional lifeguards who will eventually patrol the beaches within the LGA.

Moving forward: if budget or grant funding allows, the new council might consider increasing the lifeguard service Council provides by incorporating patrols into the shoulder season, providing an additional service at Bombo Beach and improving the facilities provided to Council lifeguards at Warri and Bombo beaches.

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Pillar 1: We belong and contribute (continued)

Blue Haven

Arguably the most momentous action of this council term has been Council's decision and ongoing work to divest itself of its large aged care business, Blue Haven Bonaira.

Kiama Council has been providing aged care services in the Municipality for more than 40 years. Blue Haven currently consists of a 134-bed residential aged care facility, 250 Independent Living Units over two sites (Bonaira and Terralong), staff and associated services (eg: Commonwealth Home Care Packages) and Community Transport.

With the reforms and increased governance in the aged care sector making it increasingly untenable for Councils to run aged care, Kiama Council is the largest remaining local government provider of aged care services in Australia.

The decision for Council to divest Blue Haven Bonaira was not taken lightly. Councillors and the community have faced ongoing challenges in this process. Council has demonstrated its commitment to open and consistent communication each step of the way with regular meetings held, individual sessions offered, and frequent website and email updates circulated to Blue Haven residents, families and loved ones, staff and the wider community.

Council has also continued to produce its quarterly, 30-page print edition of the Blue Haven Newsletter, which contains divestment updates alongside general



good news stories and information on the wonderful care and activities held at Blue Haven.

The original motion to sell Blue Haven in April 2022 was rescinded, and an updated motion that was passed in October (re-confirmed in February 2023), was subject to the reclassification of the land. The reclassification process took several months and was completed in June 2023, allowing Council to go out to tender for the sale.

The EOI and tender process was held in accordance with Local Government Legislation and, as such, took many months. In February 2024, Council resolved to

decline all tenders for Blue Haven and negotiate with the preferred tenderer.

In May 2024, Council announced the buyer for Blue Haven was Hall & Prior Aged Care and contracts were signed in June 2024, with settlement due to occur in February 2025.

Until the settlement and transfer is finalised, Council remains committed to Blue Haven, and the care and wellbeing of our residents and staff is paramount.

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CEO message – looking ahead

Pillar 1: We belong and contribute (continued)

Library Services

The opening of the newly renovated Gerringong Library and Museum (GLaM) facility was held on 1 December 2021. The public opening was attended by more than 500 people who enjoyed the smoking ceremony by Gumaraa and participated in a variety of activities and programs showcasing what would be on offer to the community ongoing.

Our libraries host and support a number of reader, writer and author events and activities including:

- National Novel Writing Month (NaNoWriMo) - an annual challenge to writers to write 50,000 words of a novel in thirty days – over November. We have supported this program in 2022 and 2023 by providing access to some amazing published author including; Clayton Zane Comber, Kate Forsyth, Jonica Newby, Meredith Jaffe, A.L. Tait, Jeff Apter, Kell Woods and Tori Haschaka.
- Embracing the Bridgeton phenomenon Gerringong Library was transformed into an elegant tea room with tables adorned with flowers and decorations which set the stage for an unforgettable experience hosting sixty distinguished ladies and gentlemen for a spectacular event. The enchanting melodies of harpist Yasmine Russell greeted guests on their arrival and a delectable High Tea was provided by a local community group as a fund raising activity.

- Early literacy programs for children have increased to include a fortnightly Baby Storytime and Toddler Tales sessions at Gerringong Library, which reflect the current programs being offered at Kiama Library. School holiday programs continue to be popular and allow children to explore new interests, develop confidence and actively engage in social interaction with others.
- Escape Room activities have been a popular Summer school holiday activity with family groups participating in puzzling their way through cyphers, riddles and physical challenges to break the curse and save the world.
- The Library's Makers and Creators program provides opportunities for community members and students to gather and learn how to create and build together. For ages 15 to 115 this intergenerational activity instils a love of lifelong learning alongside other community members. Recent activities have included block printed tea towels, watercolour felt flowers, brooches and Canva basics. This program has the added benefit of engaging with community members that are not regular attendees at other library programs.

"I think it is very important that even in a cash strapped Council with a primary focus on improving itself, that our residential communities are not forgotten and there will be some tangible outcomes that directly benefit them throughout the 2024-28 Council term ahead."

Cr Kathy Rice



INTERACTIVE NAVIGATION



Overview

We belong and contribute



We thrive in a sustainable environment



We create a strong and diverse economy



We are part of a connected and liveable community



We expect accountable and transparent leadership ...



CEO message – looking ahead

Pillar 2

We thrive in a sustainable environment



INTERACTIVE NAVIGATION



Overview

We belong and contribute



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We expect accountable and transparent leadership ...



CEO message – looking ahead






Pillar 2: We thrive in a sustainable environment

Pillar 2 Outcomes	Measures	Achieved
We protect our people, our place, our flora and fauna through our planning and our actions.	<p>Council works with local, regional and NSW and Federal Government stakeholders to comply with the Coastal Management Act.</p> <p>Coastal Management Program finalised and endorsed by the Minister.</p> <p>Minnamurra River and Crooked River Coastal Zone Management Programs are being implemented.</p>	● In progress

Pillar 2 Outcomes	Measures	Achieved
Our natural environment of spectacular beaches, rainforests and rolling hills define our place.	<p>Council conducts regular care and maintenance of our outdoor spaces. We work with local Landcare groups to deliver events such as National Tree Day in conjunction with Kiama High School.</p> <p>Council holds regular free composting workshops and provides funding and support to community gardening groups in the LGA.</p> <p>A highlight was the intergenerational gardening event, organised at Kiama Community Garden with garden volunteers, Blue Haven residents and carers, and local preschool children.</p>	● Yes

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- CEO message – looking ahead






Pillar 2: We thrive in a sustainable environment (continued)

Pillar 2 Outcomes	Measures	Achieved
We use our natural resources in efficient and sustainable ways; managing, improving or enhancing through protection, restoration and maintenance.	Regular patrols are undertaken to monitor for illegal dumping. Additionally 104 illegal dumping complaints were received and investigated in the 2023-24 financial year.	● Yes
	Waste and Sustainable Materials Strategy has been drafted and will go on public exhibition in late 2024.	
	Regular waste audits are conducted and Kiama scores well, see stats on page 24.	
	Regular waste events include: Household Bulky Waste, Second Hand Saturday, Household Chemical Clean out, Fabric Swap and Clothes Swap events.	
	We have maintained our compliance with EPA standards.	

Pillar 2 Outcomes	Measures	Achieved
We work together to understand and respond to the need for growth and change.	Our Corporate Emissions Reduction Plan (Net Zero Strategy) continues to be worked through with LED street light upgrades implemented in partnership with Endeavour Energy and the gradual shift of the Council fleet to electric vehicles (where possible).	● In progress
	We have also partnered with Endeavour Energy to introduce the LGAs first Community Battery.	
	We have completed and published Bushfire Mapping in accordance with NSW Rural Fire Service requirements.	
	Flood studies have been conducted, with funding being sought to implement recommendations.	
	Growth & Housing Strategy has been drafted (see pillar 4)	
	Crisis management procedures and policies are being developed.	

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Pillar 2: We thrive in a sustainable environment (continued)

Reducing our footprint

Kiama Council has continued to work on reducing both our carbon footprint and to reduce the amount of waste sent to landfill by encouraging residents to reduce, reuse and recycle.

Our regular waste events remain very popular. These include Household Bulky Waste, which is held twice a year in March and September and allows Kiama residents to book in and drop off bulky waste to our Community Recycling Facility for free. The event also hosts an 'Up for Grabs' shed where pre-loved goods such as furniture, surfboards and other sporting equipment, books, toys and household goods can be given another lease on life by being claimed by someone new.

Council also hosts Second Hand Saturday, a large car-boot sale open to Kiama residents as stallholders and anyone to come along to browse and buy. There's also a fabric swap event, regular free composting workshops, the Household Chemical Clean Out and various other waste education events and campaigns.



Our Corporate Emissions Reduction Plan 2021-2031 (Net Zero Strategy) continues to be worked through. During this term of Council, steps towards reducing our carbon emissions to net zero included the following:

- All municipal street lights switched to LED, in conjunction with Endeavour Energy
- Photovoltaic panels on the roof of our Leisure Centre and Blue Haven Bonaira
- Installation of the Kiama Downs Community Battery, led by Endeavour Energy

- Being an active part of the Cities Power Partnership, Australia's largest government climate network that represents close to 11 million Australians.
- The Mayor's car is now a fully electric vehicle (EV).
- Kiama Council joined forces with our neighbouring Shoalhaven and Shellharbour councils to secure a renewable electricity agreement with innovative energy retailer, Flow Power.



864,000 bins lifted 2023–24 FY



1310 tonnes of green waste received



390 tonnes of scrap metal received

INTERACTIVE NAVIGATION



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We expect accountable and transparent leadership ...



CEO message – looking ahead

Pillar 2: We thrive in a sustainable environment (continued)

Open Spaces & Recreation

Our Open Space and Recreation team have undertaken a service review in this Council term and will look to report and implement any actions and outcomes moving forward.

Other achievements in this area include:

- Old School Park Gerringong playground upgrade – Council replaced the aging play equipment at Old School Park in Gerringong with new equipment including swings. Completed May 2023 cost \$165,000.
- Headland Drive Gerroa playground upgrade – after aboriginal heritage issues at Emery Park Gerroa delayed that project. The new equipment greatly improved the play opportunities at that location. A new playground will be built at Emery Park when heritage issues are resolved.
- Public Tree Management Policy – The Tree Planting Policy and tree and Vegetation Vandalism Policy were combined to form the new Public Tree Management Policy. This policy went through several revisions after community consultation and focus group scrutiny, and was adopted in April 2022. This document improves the way council manages trees on public land.

Looking forward to the next Council term, our Open Space and Recreation teams will finalise Council’s Open Space and Recreation Strategy. This strategy will guide and assist Council and the community in understanding current and near-term demand for recreational facilities and what types of recreational facilities and open space is required into the future for the Kiama Municipality.

Council is also looking toward finalisation of the Masterplans for South Werri Reserve and Kiama Sport Complex and Leisure Centre. These masterplans will provide Council with a guide to future proposed development for these sites



“There is plenty of work ahead for the new Council, the long-awaited Traffic and Parking Study and the Rural Land Use Strategy both await finalisation and there are still many actions towards protecting agriculture and agricultural lands to progress. I am looking forward to hearing more of Council’s progress towards Zero Carbon by 2031 and watching as Urban Greening outcomes become visible.”

Cr Kathy Rice

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CEO message – looking ahead

Pillar 3

We create a strong and diverse economy



INTERACTIVE NAVIGATION



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We create a strong and diverse economy



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We expect accountable and transparent leadership ...



CEO message – looking ahead






Pillar 3: We create a strong and diverse economy

Pillar 3 Outcomes	Measures	Achieved
<p>A strong economy, vibrant local businesses and local economic growth.</p>	<p>Council appointed an Economic Development Officer during this term, who worked closely with the Kiama & District Business Chamber and Destination Kiama to strengthen ties with and promote economic opportunities to local businesses. Council supported and promoted events such as the Local Business Awards, the Illawarra Business Awards and Small Business Month.</p> <p>Destination Kiama continued its successful partnership program, incorporating hundreds of local businesses and suppliers.</p> <p>Since the Community Strategic Plan (CSP) was published, our local economy has grown from \$1.668 billion (2020 stats) to \$2.3 billion in 2024 (REMPPLAN).</p> <p>The number of local jobs has risen from 5,260 to 6,794 (REMPPLAN 2024).</p> <p>Kiama Council's Economic Development Strategy 2018-2022 will be updated in the upcoming Council term.</p> <p>Number of local businesses have risen to 2,119 (ABS).</p> <p>Kiama's draft Growth & Housing Strategy (see info under Pillar 4) is being developed and will identify employment lands and needs in the area.</p> <p>We have worked towards an LGA-wide economic development strategy by undertaking the State of our Economy assessment and are working towards completion of Employment Lands Strategy. These will feed into the updated Economic Development Strategy and Growth and Housing Strategy.</p>	<p>● Yes</p>



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Pillar 3: We create a strong and diverse economy (continued)



Pillar 3 Outcomes	Measures	Achieved
<p>An economy that embraces the opportunities of tourism while ensuring that we don't lose our community feel; our tourism development and the visitor economy is well managed.</p>	<p>Council's tourism and events unit, Destination Kiama, has continued to work successfully with local and regional businesses, event organisers and suppliers in its partnerships program.</p> <p>Destination Kiama has been successful in securing grants for a mix of community and visitor events.</p> <p>Council's Tourism and Events Advisory Committee (TEAC) meets bi-monthly and advises Kiama Council on tourism policy and strategy, including the development and implementation of the Kiama Tourism and Events Strategic Plan (2022-26) and its Action Plan, as well as the Kiama Major Events Impact Report (2024), while addressing tourism-related community impacts, supporting sustainable visitor growth, identifying investment opportunities, guiding marketing efforts, and raising awareness of the visitor economy's benefits.</p> <p>Visitor number remain consistent at 1.1m for the year ending March 2024 (this is down on March 2023 figures but in line with figures when the CSP was developed). However total visitor nights is at a record 1.9 million resulting in an increased spend, and an increased average stay of 3.4 nights (all time 12-month record).</p> <p>The Kiama Major Events Impact Review and Recommendations Report was initiated due to an increase in large-scale event applications and their cumulative effect. It supports hosting up to six major events annually based on feedback from focus groups, resident and attendee surveys. While major events don't closely align with the Tourism and Events Strategic Plan's goal of positioning Kiama as a destination for boutique events, they are effective in addressing seasonality challenges, boosting visitor spending, and supporting local businesses.</p>	<p>● Yes</p>

INTERACTIVE NAVIGATION



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- [We create a strong and diverse economy !\[\]\(27d314856359a9d7feca17161bc1f4a4_img.jpg\)](#)
- [We are part of a connected and liveable community !\[\]\(d355663486c698e3972a8b93ac8b2102_img.jpg\)](#)
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Pillar 3: We create a strong and diverse economy

(continued)

Kiama Coast Holiday Parks

Kiama Council runs five Kiama Coast Holiday Parks across our LGA: Kiama Harbour Cabins, Surf Beach Holiday Park, Kendalls Beach Holiday Park, Warri Beach Holiday Park and Seven Mile Beach Holiday Park.

Our Holiday Parks have welcomed a large number of visitors during this period, following the dip in bookings caused by the COVID-19 pandemic.

For the period from December 2021 to August 2024 (this Council term), Kiama Coast Holiday Parks recorded the following figures:

 **\$30.8 million** combined income

 **799,720** tourist nights

 An average of **198,000** visitor nights for long term casual Holiday vans

 **67%** Average cabin occupancy

 **60.25** Average site occupancy

In May 2022 Council commenced a \$3.8 million program of works to undertake compliance and improvement works across all five of its Holiday Parks over several years. This work is ongoing.

Looking forward: the Holiday Parks will continue and complete its compliance program over the five Holiday Parks. We will also review and renew management contracts for the five Holiday Parks, as per the cycle of regular reviews.

Regular wins include attending industry consumer events such as the Sydney Caravanning and Camping Show, the Canberra Caravan and Camping Expo, and the Sydney Dog Show. The latter introduced our Holiday Parks to a whole new cohort of clientele, resulting in a large increase to our mailing list and anticipated bookings.



INTERACTIVE NAVIGATION



Overview

We belong and contribute



We thrive in a sustainable environment



We create a strong and diverse economy



We are part of a connected and liveable community



We expect accountable and transparent leadership ...



CEO message – looking ahead

Pillar 3: We create a strong and diverse economy

(continued)

Tourism & Events

Kiama Council's tourism and events division, Destination Kiama has gone from strength to strength. This Council term began towards the end of the COVID-19 pandemic and as such saw a significant resurgence in visitor numbers to our area.


Kiama Municipality has always been a popular holiday destination, within easy reach of Sydney, Wollongong and Canberra. We boast an excellent variety of events, activities and local attractions. This resulted in Kiama being awarded NSW's Top Tourist Town 2024 earlier in the year. A well-deserved accolade which is also testament to the hard work and dedication of our Destination Kiama team, Tourism and Economic Advisory Board and Kiama Council.

Meanwhile, our premier events venue, The Pavilion, also continues to thrive with a very full calendar of events including large one-off music festivals regulars such as the 'Kiama I Do' wedding trail and community events such as the Christmas Market and Kiama Show as well as a host of conferences, meetings, weddings, community meetings, concerts and other events.

In the 12 months from March 2023 to March 2024, our local tourism industry saw:

 **\$330 million** injected into the Kiama economy

 **77,000** international visitors

 **522,000** day visitors
524,000 overnight visitors

 **3.4 nights** was the average length of stay

Source - Tourism Research Australia

The Pavilion

- Total of 362 events held in 2023-24.
- Client surveys show an overall venue, catering and customer service rating of 9/10 for events held in the 2023-24 year.
- Increase in Formals from 3 in 2020 to 10 booked for 2024.
- Collaboration with local accommodation houses and council run holiday parks to offers guests attending events at the Pavilion a discount when holding their event at the Pavilion.
- Partner with local wedding vendors for Kiama I Do Wedding Expo to attract clients to local area for destination weddings.

"Destination Kiama has matured and is delivering on all measures as set out in the Tourism Opportunities Plan. We now have an excellent "calendar of events" year-round and support from the community at large for our events. This has led to us being awarded the Top Tourist Town in NSW for 2024!"

Cr Matt Brown



INTERACTIVE NAVIGATION



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CEO message – looking ahead

Pillar 4

We are part of a connected and liveable community



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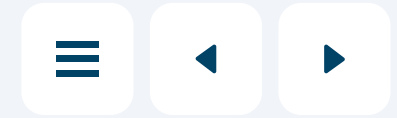







CEO message – looking ahead

Pillar 4: We are part of a connected and liveable community

Pillar 4 Outcomes	Measures	Achieved	Pillar 4 Outcomes	Measures	Achieved
We love where we live; our housing reflects our values.	<p>Council has developed its draft Growth & Housing strategy by seeking community and stakeholder feedback. The strategy sets out a roadmap for reasonable and sustainable growth and housing across the LGA and wider region.</p> <p>Council continues to work with the NSW Government and Department of Planning on housing. We attend Land and Environment Court to resolve issues when required. Council works with the Illawarra Housing Trust on affordable housing.</p> <p>The Scenic Management Study has been deferred and will be further explored following the adoption of the Growth and Housing Strategy. Visual impact and scenic analysis is currently a requirement of any development in our rural and environmental landscape.</p>	● In progress	We are well connected within our local community, and to our region.	<p>Council provides advice and approvals in line with NSW Government legislation and our planning instruments and guidelines.</p> <p>Progress has been made on regional cycleways, shared pathways and roads to maximise access to key destinations and facilities, although there is still more to achieve in this area, particularly around the Jamberoo cycleway extension.</p> <p>New signage was installed along the Kiama Coast Walk, which provides visitor information and increases both wayfinding and safety (eg: signs featuring emergency contact information and locations are now located every 2km along the Loves Bay to Werri Beach section of the Kiama Coast Walk).</p>	● Yes

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- CEO message – looking ahead






Pillar 4: We are part of a connected and liveable community (continued)

Pillar 4 Outcomes	Measures	Achieved
Our built environment is safe and inclusive; our infrastructure is well planned and well managed.	Asset Management Plans are in place or are being developed for all Council owned and managed assets and infrastructure.	● Yes
	Cycling Maps were updated in prior to the World Cycling Championships in 2022.	
	All new infrastructure works undertaken by Council are compliant with AS1428. Any upgrade works to existing infrastructure are made AS1428 compliant wherever it is viable to do so.	
	We launched the Kiama Rides guide in April 2024 which outlines nine diverse rides catering to riders with a range of skills and experience.	
We embrace innovation and new technologies and resources that improve environmental and social outcomes.	We have maintained the number of local education providers in the region and continue to partner with our local providers where there is opportunity including the Kiama High School Careers Day.	● In progress
	Working closely with our tenant Jamberoo Preschool to provide a solution to regular flooding of their Council-owned facility.	
	Councillors and Council staff regularly attend regional forums, networks and conference events and return to share knowledge (via Council report, internal briefings, etc.).	



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Pillar 4: We are part of a connected and liveable community (continued)

Leading growth for good

Kiama Council is embarking on an inclusive and dynamic journey and encouraging every member of the community to actively participate in this pivotal conversation that will shape the trajectory of Kiama's future.

The growth conversation delves into the intricacies of our evolving landscape.

Recognising the national housing shortage, and local government's role in managing growth, we aim to collaboratively identify suitable sites for growth, explore practical solutions, and define essential infrastructure which are fundamental for responsible growth.

Strategic planning for growth, housing and development is always a key topic for Local Government and the communities they serve.

In this council term, much progress was made towards a Growth and Housing Strategy, alongside other important planning documents being progressed. Some of these include:

- Heritage reviews
- Coastal Management Plan
- Crown Lands Plan of Management
- Development Application assessment policy

"The last term of Council saw several longer-term projects come to fruition. I am pleased that following its beginnings in 2019–2020 the Kiama Growth and Housing Strategy was recently finalised. I am hopeful that through it, the expressed needs of our community will guide the developments to be constructed in Kiama."

Cr Kathy Rice



INTERACTIVE NAVIGATION



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CEO message – looking ahead

Pillar 4: We are part of a connected and liveable community (continued)

Infrastructure & Liveability

It has been a busy term for Council's Infrastructure and Liveability team, which includes Road Safety, Engineering, Technical Services, Property Services, Tree Management, Parks and Outdoor Spaces, Cemeteries, Holiday Parks and Lifeguard Services. Highlights include:

Road safety

- Road safety officer supported by Transport for NSW
- Annual participation in National Road Safety Week
- Education for top road safety initiatives
 - Driving while distracted
 - Speed
 - Drugs and alcohol
- Helping Learner Drivers Become Safer Driver workshops and Learner Logbook Runs, including a night time run
- Coffee with a Cop
- Investigation of road safety matters within the Kiama LGA, including traffic and parking
- New Kiama High School pedestrian crossing
- New Bong Bong Street pedestrian crossing near railway station
- School safety improvements for pedestrians around various schools (signs and lines).

Natural disaster recovery

- March 2022 event
 - Landslips and trees down on multiple roads resulting in road closures.
 - Short term flooding in Gerringong, Jamberoo and Kiama.
 - Recovery works funded through Federal and State Government only completed in 2024 due to extent of damage to road infrastructure and landslips in difficult locations.
 - Further rain caused a major landslip on Jamberoo Mountain Road in July 2022, resulting in the closure of the road for an extensive period of time, reopening in mid July 2023.

Jamberoo Mountain Road

Video and regular updates kiama.nsw.gov.au/Council/News/Your-council-your-community/Engineering-a-new-Jamberoo-Mountain-Road.






Link to video: kiama.nsw.gov.au/Council/News/Jamberoo-Road-reopens.

- 2024 events in May and June
 - Landslips and trees down on multiple roads resulting in road closures, many on the same roads impacted in the 2022 weather event.
 - Recovery works are ongoing, with two landslip outstanding and planned for late 2024-25.



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Pillar 4: We are part of a connected and liveable community (continued)

Flood reports

- Gerringong and Jamberoo flood management study completed in 2022.
- Currently undertaking Risk Management plans for Jamberoo and Spring Creek, including concept designs for future improvements.

Ongoing projects

Hindmarsh Park

After an extensive community engagement and design process, the build contract for the enhancement of Hindmarsh Park was awarded in November 2023 to Growth Civil Landscapes. This project was completed in September 2024 with the grand opening held on 21 October 2024. Several NSW Government Agencies provided funding for the project resulting in the installation of a variety of attractive features, such as a water play area, rock climbing facilities, towers, rope climbs, bridges, inclusive play elements, slides, swing sets, shade canopies, bicycle lockers and repair station and a barbeque area. The upgrade also included new and improved pathways and a revamp of the Orry Kelly Stage.

Jamberoo sports field lighting upgrade

Upgrade existing lighting to LED and addition of some new poles to extend ability to use the sports fields. Project due for completion late 2024.



Jamberoo dog park

Scheduled to begin work late 2024-early 2025.

"For the 2024-25 financial year, the council has planned a \$13.9 million capital works program, primarily funded by grants and reserves, to ensure continued investment in community infrastructure."

Mayor Neil Reilly

INTERACTIVE NAVIGATION



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We expect accountable and transparent leadership ...



CEO message – looking ahead

Pillar 4: We are part of a connected and liveable community (continued)

Property management

Highlights from our property management team include:

- Divestment of Akuna Street (South)
- Divestment of Irvine Street, Kiama
- Divestment of Lot 100 South Kiama Drive, Kiama
- Development and endorsement of Council Managed Crown Land Plan of Management
- Delivery of Community Battery project - Kiama Downs

Looking ahead, our property team will be working towards the following:

- Development of a Property Strategy
- Divestment of identified lands
- Development of a Rental Rebate Policy



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We expect accountable and transparent leadership ...



CEO message – looking ahead

Pillar 5

We expect

accountable

and transparent

leadership;

a financially

sustainable

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CEO message – looking ahead






Pillar 5: We expect accountable and transparent leadership; a financially sustainable Council

Pillar 5 Outcomes	Measures	Achieved
Public funds and assets are managed strategically, transparently and efficiently.	<p>Council has made huge progress with its financial reporting, completing three sets of financial statements in 2024 to get up to date.</p> <p>This term of Council has focused on financial sustainability and transparency, with an unprecedented amount of financial information reported regularly to Councillors and the community via Council's business papers.</p> <p>Our Audit Risk and Improvement Committee (ARIC) and Financial Advisory Committee (FAC) meet regularly and provide advice and guidance.</p> <p>This high-level of reporting and detail has been well established and will continue through the next Council term, as best practice, and also to meet the requirements of the NSW Government issued Performance Improvement Order.</p>	<p>● Yes</p>



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Pillar 5: We expect accountable and transparent leadership; a financially sustainable Council

(continued)

Pillar 5 Outcomes	Measures	Achieved	Pillar 5 Outcomes	Measures	Achieved
Governance is transparent and builds trust.	Key documents including the Strategic Improvement Plans, Performance Improvement Orders, and Strategic Finance & Governance Improvement Plan have been developed to guide Council's operations and meaningfully measure how the actions and strategies of the CSP and other documents impact on the delivery of Council's work, as well as ensuring Council meets the requirements of the NSW Government imposed Performance Improvement Order (PIO).	● Yes		Council updated its Social Media Policy, endorsed its first Media Policy and drafted a Customer Service Charter. This suite of documents help ensure good communications, engagement and customer service.	● Yes
	Council provides our community, stakeholders and local media with a steady and regular stream of information, updates, press releases, business papers, and other communications. This has helped to forge and in some cases also repair relationships and build trust in the community.			A community satisfaction survey will be undertaken in early 2025.	
	Council has substantially revised and updated its Community Engagement Strategy and is developing a practical framework to undertake and measure community engagement.			The number of Code of Conduct complaints increased, but Council will work to provide Councillor induction and workshops to reduce this number in the incoming Council.	
				The Hopwood Review of Governance Arrangements was received by Council in early 2022 and contained 35 recommendations, all of which have been actioned.	
				Council's Committees Framework Policy was endorsed in this term and Council committees have been maintained.	

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Pillar 5: We expect accountable and transparent leadership; a financially sustainable Council (continued)



Pillar 5 Outcomes	Measures	Achieved
<p>Council has the right structures, technology, processes and procedures to support their role in delivering for the public.</p>	<p>Council has worked hard to restructure the organisation to align functions, appoint permanent staff where people were acting or there were gaps and to 'rightsize' our teams and departments.</p> <p>A total of 41 policies have been reviewed and endorsed by Council during their term in office.</p> <p>While the updated IT Strategy is still under development, we have made big progress implementing Council's enterprise management platform, TechologyOne and updating some of our legacy platforms. Our website continues to get good traffic and will see the addition of a community engagement platform and Councillor Portal in late 2024.</p>	<p>● In progress</p>

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Pillar 5: We expect accountable and transparent leadership; a financially sustainable Council

(continued)

Performance Improvement Order and Strategic Plans

This Council term began with a CEO report on the "State of the Organisation" in February 2022 that identified three crucial areas for urgent attention:

- Financial sustainability
- Organisational capability, culture and performance
- Risk and governance

Council followed this up by drafting a Strategic Improvement Plan (SIP), which was adopted by Council in May 2022. The SIP had four focus areas: finance and costs, assets, communications, and staff.

Kiama Mayor Neil Reilly said: "A Strategic Improvement Plan allows us to immediately focus on what needs to be addressed to stabilise and improve our situation."

In April 2022 Council received a forensic report prepared by accountancy firm Forsyths that covered an assessment of Kiama Council's historical financial data and transactions regarding:

- Cash management
- Blue Haven Bonaira development
- Developer contribution reserves

On 8 November 2022, Kiama Council was issued with a Performance Improvement Order (PIO) by the Hon. Wendy Tuckerman MP, Minister for Local Government. Council completed this first Performance Improvement Order in June 2023.

In April 2023, Council adopted its updated Strategic Improvement Plan (SIP2), which captured actions from the PIO.

Council was issued with a [varied Performance Improvement Order](#) in May 2024.

In July 2024 Council endorsed a Strategic Finance & Governance Improvement Plan, which was prepared both as a requirement of the varied PIO and also to reiterate Council's primary obligation is to be financially sustainable and make effective use of the public funds entrusted to us and ensure the responsible management and planning of community assets, so that future ratepayers are not burdened unnecessarily.

The varied PIO requires Council to become financially sustainable by the 2026-2027 financial year.



INTERACTIVE NAVIGATION



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CEO message – looking ahead

Pillar 5: We expect accountable and transparent leadership; a financially sustainable Council (continued)

In our Strategic Finance & Governance Improvement Plan, Council has identified eight (8) strategic levers to help get to where we need to be and guide Council's direction over the following two to three years to achieve financial sustainability. These levers are:

- 1 Sustainable cash reserves & responsible borrowing
- 2 Optimised revenue opportunities
- 3 Well planned assets
- 4 Reviewed and efficient service landscape
- 5 Investment in transformation
- 6 Robust financial management
- 7 Prioritising advocacy and partnerships
- 8 Ensure good governance

Council staff will provide bi-monthly status reports on the actions of the Strategic Finance & Governance Improvement Plan to both the elected body and the NSW Office of Local Government. Copies of these status reports will also be published on Council's website.



"Kiama Council has implemented a series of financial and governance reforms, driven by our own Strategic Improvement Plan and echoed by Performance Improvement Orders issued by the NSW Minister for Local Government."

Mayor Neil Reilly

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CEO message – looking ahead

Pillar 5: We expect accountable and transparent leadership; a financially sustainable Council (continued)

Service reviews

In February 2023, Council resolved to undertake service reviews of four key areas:

- Kiama Leisure Centre
- Holiday Parks
- Waste Services
- The Pavilion

In addition, Council is conducting service reviews in some of its other departments. This will be a rolling program of reviews, as per legislative and IP&R requirements.

Service reviews are a very normal, and indeed legislated, part of Local Government operations. However, Kiama Council hasn't done service reviews for many years, which is not ideal but the situation is now being rectified.

Service reviews give us a chance to consider what services we are delivering, innovation opportunities and required changes that might be needed.

Going forward into the new Council term, our Implementation Team will be coordinating Kiama Council's service reviews, conducting community engagement as needed and reporting results to Council and our community.



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CEO message – looking ahead

Pillar 5: We expect accountable and transparent leadership; a financially sustainable Council

(continued)

People and Performance

Council made excellent progress working through organisation structure changes to improve synergy, collaboration and efficiency of output and services to the community.

This involved

- Roles and appointments made as a result of re-purposing existing positions and centralising work functions, rather than creating brand new roles
- Where possible, appointing permanent or part-time staff where we were previously relying on contractors
- Our reliance on contractors and consultants has been greatly reduced
- We continue the process to 'rightsize' the organisation and our departments

During the period of the pandemic and associated restrictions and lockdowns, Council's People and Performance team led organisational compliance, service continuity during impact period. The team assessed and implemented the resulting positive wellbeing, technological and flexible approaches into our current working conditions.

As an organisation, Council has worked closely with our Councillors, chairs of Audit, Risk & Improvement, Financial Advisory and Blue Haven Advisory Committee's and our executive to define, treat and evaluate the strategic risks that impact Council's objectives.

This period has also seen Council review its Employee Value Proposition – The EVP Project – in particular looking at what Council offers in the market and how to market the organisation to potential candidates. In doing so, Council updated its recruitment advertising and increased our flexible working options and promoted study assistance. This also resulted in development of a Senior Staff Attraction & Retention Policy.

Other internal successes include:

- Implementation of the payroll TechOne software including the roll out of electronic timesheets, significant efficiency gains and more compliant record retention.
- The Rural Management Challenge is a professional development opportunity Council staff that is specially designed for councils in rural and regional areas of NSW. Kiama's Rural and Regional Management Challenge Team won the prestigious event in both 2021 and 2022, announced at the NSW Local Government Excellence Awards each year.
- Improvements to Council's Delegations review and issue process have been substantially implemented and are now hosted on a repository platform that integrates onto Council's website.
- Engaged governance expert Tood Hopwood to review Kiama Council's governance policies, processes, resources and personnel. The Hopwood report made 35 recommendations, all of which have since been or are being implemented, including all

seven of the recommendations listed for immediate action.

- Councillor induction and professional development program developed and delivered.
- Creation of key plans and policies including but not limited to: Crisis Communications Plan, Psychosocial Risk Policy, Child Safe Standards across Council, Complaints Handling Policy, Flexible Work Policy.
- Updating emergency management processes in Blue Haven ILUs.
- Diversity, Equity and Inclusion focus with recruitment and selection practices.
- Leadership and development programs for Executive and Management Leadership teams.
- Commenced review of critical risk and safety culture.
- Recognition of significant days including R U OK? day, Harmony week, International Womens Day, International Mens Day and Local Government Week Awards.



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CEO message – looking ahead

Pillar 5: We expect accountable and transparent leadership; a financially sustainable Council (continued)

Rebooting community engagement

Recognising the importance of good communications and community engagement, Council invested in these key areas during this term.

This saw Council develop and update key strategies and policies such as our Social Media Policy, Media Policy, Customer Service Charter and Community Engagement Strategy.

In 2024 we welcomed onboarded our first-ever Community Engagement Officer, taking on board consistent feedback from the Community and our Councillors that Kiama Council recognise the importance of enhancing our work in this crucial area.

One of the Community Engagement Officer's first and more vital tasks was to revise and reboot our outdated Community Engagement Strategy, which we kicked off with a unique co-design process to draft the strategy and followed up with a comprehensive series of community engagements, workshops and information gathering.

The updated Community Engagement Strategy was endorsed in June 2024 and provides a practical framework for delivering meaningful and measurable community engagement and amplifying a diversity of voices in our community and stakeholders.

During this term, Council also had success with is Your Council, Your Community monthly advertorial page in a local newspaper, which highlighted various Council departments and promoted our events and projects.

In 2024, we moved to video, launching a regular, post-Council meeting Mayoral video and a new program of 'Your Council, Your Community' videos, with the first featuring staff from Kiama Leisure Centre.

"Another achievement that responded to community wishes was the development of the Customer Service Charter, which should soon be operative for those contacting Council."

Cr Kathy Rice



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CEO message – looking ahead

CEO message – looking ahead

As we conclude the 2021-24 term of Kiama Council, my team and I are future-focused on the road ahead.

As this State of our Municipality report shows, this term of Council has provided its share of challenges. I'm proud of how both the organisation and governing body rose to those challenges and made progress.

I'd like to give particular praise to our finance team, who have worked diligently to get our financial statements back on track and into real-time data, with reliable monthly reporting. This could not have been achieved without ongoing assistance from the Audit Office of NSW, which has been greatly appreciated.

As we welcome our new and returning Councillors for this next term, I'm looking forward to engaging with our elected body, and our community, to envision what they want Kiama Council to become over the next decade. With the divestment of Blue Haven Bonaira and a refocusing on municipal services, we already know that our Council operations will look very different in that respect.

We're also hyper aware of retaining and maintaining the things our community and our elected representatives value so highly: our pristine environment, focused on sustainability, the sense of togetherness and a strong and diverse economy.

We also know that our community expects accountable and transparent leadership and a

Council that is financially sustainable, and I remain steadfastly committed to this goal. It's no secret that all these things have been pillars of our Community Strategic Plan for the past term. While the wording may change when we create our next CSP, as we move into the 2024-28 term of Council, the sentiment and goal posts will stay the same. We must spend within our means, manage the business efficiently and strive to improve the culture and safety practices of the organisation.

In looking ahead, a draft 'Roadmap to Recovery' report has been prepared and will be workshopped with Councillors so that a clearer vision, set milestones and decision points are evident, understood and shared. The draft roadmap lists achievements and advocacy projects, as well as outlining key policy positions and goals for the next two years while we strive to meet and have lifted the NSW Government Performance Improvement Order.

I'm feeling optimistic about the road ahead and working with a cohesive elected body and the staff of the organisation.

Thanks,



Jane Stroud
Chief Executive Officer



Jane Stroud

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CEO message – looking ahead

How to contact council

Post

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

Telephone

+61 (02) 4232 0444

Online

Email: council@kiama.nsw.gov.au

Website: www.kiama.nsw.gov.au



In person

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



Respect
Innovation
Integrity
Teamwork
Excellence

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Date approved/adopted
20 November 2024

Resolution No
24/311OC

Department
CEO's office

Responsible Officer
Manager People & Performance