



Community Engagement Strategy 2024-2028

Your community, your say



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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Overview

Purpose

Kiama Municipal Council (Council) is committed to developing a culture of meaningful community engagement to achieve better and more sustainable outcomes for the municipality. The Community Engagement Strategy serves as a practical framework for Council, underpinned by the Social Justice Principles of access, equity, participation and rights, to engage with diverse voices across our community. It outlines the principles and processes for best-practice community engagement, in line with Council's Community Strategic Plan 2022 – 2032 and in accordance with legislative requirements.

Legislative requirements

Community engagement is delivered with due consideration to mandatory and statutory requirements to which Council must adhere. These requirements may limit or allow community input into Council decision-making. Under Section 420A of the New South Wales Local Government Act 1993, Councils are required to establish and implement a Community Engagement Strategy to engage with the local community to support the development of all plans, policies, programs and key activities.

The Integrated Planning and Reporting (IP&R) framework, displayed in diagram 1, illustrates the important role of community engagement across Council's planning. Under this framework, Community Engagement Strategies must:

- Be based on the Social Justice Principles of access, equity, participation and rights
- Identify relevant stakeholder groups in the community
- Outline the methods that Council will use to engage each of these groups
- Allow sufficient time to effectively undertake the engagement.

Community Participation Plan

Council is also required to have a Community Participation Plan (CPP). The CPP sets out when and how Council will engage with the community on statutory planning and development matters, such as development applications and planning proposals. The CPP sits alongside this Strategy in providing Council's overall framework for community engagement.

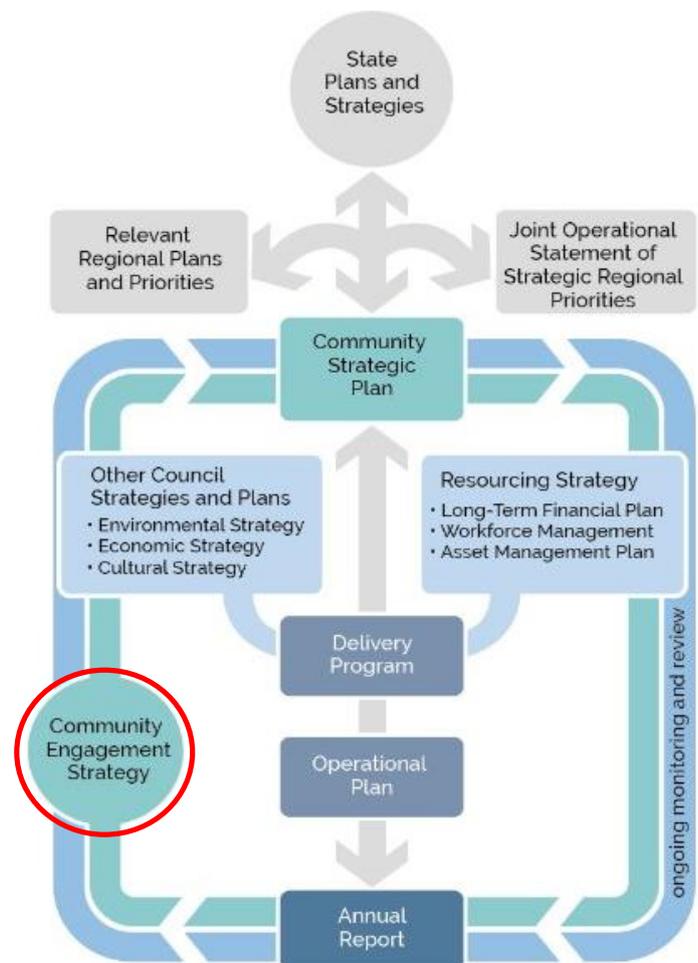


Diagram 1: Integrated Planning and Reporting framework

Understanding community engagement

Community engagement is about fostering productive relationships between Council and the communities it serves, making better decisions and improving outcomes for our people and places. The Community Engagement Strategy is an opportunity to expand Council's engagement practices beyond the legislative requirements, delivering community engagement that is meaningful to the communities we serve.

Best practice

Council strives to deliver best-practice community engagement based on the Core Values of the International Association for Public Participation (IAP2). These are:

1. Public participation is based on the belief that those who are affected by a decision have a right to be involved in the decision-making process.
2. Public participation includes the promise that the public's contribution will influence the decision.
3. Public participation promotes sustainable decisions by recognising and communicating the needs and interests of all participants, including decision-makers.
4. Public participation seeks out and facilitates the participation of those potentially affected by or interested in a decision.
5. Public participation seeks input from participants in designing how they participate.
6. Public participation provides participants with the information they need to participate in a meaningful way.
7. Public participation communicates to participants how their input affected the decision.

IAP2's Public Participation Spectrum identifies five levels of stakeholder and community engagement. It is recognised as the industry standard community engagement model. Council has adopted the Spectrum to facilitate best-practice engagement.

	Inform	Consult	Involve	Collaborate	Empower
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.	To place final decision-making in the hands of community.
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.	We will implement what you decide.
Example methods	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Council Website • Social Media • Council e-newsletter (Kimunico) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Online or paper surveys • Call for submissions • Community pop-ups 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Digital engagement • Workshops • Panel discussions 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Council Committees • Working groups 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Citizen Juries • Voting

Developing the Strategy

Developed in consultation with both the community and Council staff, this Strategy outlines community priorities for meaningful engagement with Council and the Staff requirements to deliver meaningful engagement effectively. The Strategy was also developed with due consideration to local, State and Federal strategies and plans, policies, and other requirements. Insights from community engagement activities undertaken as part of the development and delivery of the Community Strategic Plan (2022-2032) and Disability Inclusion Action Plan were also used to inform this Strategy.

Consultation

A series of engagement activities were delivered across Phase 1: Co-design and Phase 2: Public Exhibition in early 2024 to guide the development of the Strategy. Detailed Engagement Summary Reports for both phases are available on our [Your Say](#) page.

Community consultation

- Community pop-ups across the Municipality
- Met with various committees and stakeholder groups
- "Your community, your say" survey
- Youth engagement observations
- Called for submissions on the Draft Strategy

Staff consultation

- Cross-departmental staff workshop
- Staff survey
- Interviews with executives and key staff members
- Councillor briefing
- Called for submissions on the Draft Strategy

What we heard

Community told us:

- Meet community where they are to be more visible and reach a greater diversity of voices.
- Clear and transparent communication on the purpose of engagement, timeline and the extent of community influence on decisions.
- Close the loop through timely follow-up communications tailored to the audience, detailing progress, outcomes, how input was used and fulfilment of commitments.
- Community pop-ups with relevant staff are a popular, informal and effective way for the community to interact with Council staff.
- Collaborate with youth and other underrepresented groups to co-design and implement engagement activities that are relevant and accessible to them.

Staff told us:

- Significant barriers to overcome include limited resources and budget and required organisational /systems transformation.
- Provide clarity on roles and responsibilities for all stages of community engagement.
- Build staff capacity and provide practical tools.
- Consider the time required to effectively plan, design, implement and report on community engagement.
- Continuously evaluate community engagement activities to ensure the program effectively meets community needs.



Community preferences

Receive Council information

Multiple mediums, with a preference for:

- Local newspapers
- Regular e-newsletter
- Rates notice/brochure in letterbox
- Council's social media pages
- Council website

Provide Council with input and feedback:

Multiple mediums, with a preference for:

- Filling out a survey
- Writing a letter or email
- Community pop-ups
- Quick online polls
- Phone call

Interested to be engaged on

1. Town planning and development (65%)
2. Opportunities to provide feedback on Council projects (48%)
3. Environment and land/coastal management (35%)
4. Parks, venues, playgrounds, recreational facilities (34%)
5. Roadworks and infrastructure (26%)

"It sounds like you're asking the right questions"

"In 52 years in the area, there's been lots of change!"

"Progress can be qualitative not quantitative"

"Youth are often not interested in engaging with council, too busy with other things!"

"Council needs to repair the community's trust before it can move forward"

"Ratepayers are looking for outcomes, not more talk"

"You can reach young parents at the gym, pre-schools, Leisure Centre and daycares"

"Council needs to close the loop and be transparent"

"If we spend time making a submission, we really want to know how our input has made a difference"

"Students liked feeling heard and giving feedback on big issues impacting the community."

"Our youth are the future of our community, so being heard is something that is very important to today's society."



Strategic approach

Insights gathered during consultation have directly informed Council's approach to the Community Engagement Strategy.

The following are developed in response to input from those engaged regarding what the Strategy should aim to achieve. They will guide how Council designs, plans, delivers and reports on future engagement activities.

Objective

To be a practical framework for delivering meaningful and measurable community engagement while strengthening the diversity of community voices.

Principles

In addition to the strategic objective above, insights from community and staff consultation led to the development of 5 key principles for undertaking meaningful community engagement, which are underpinned by the Social Justice Principles:

These are:

- **Open and honest**
Engagement will be open, honest and transparent so community understands how their feedback will be taken into consideration and why certain decisions have been made.
- **Proactive**
Engagement will proactively seek to understand community perspectives early in decision-making.
- **Genuine**
Engagement will seek to genuinely listen to what community has to say and to ensure it is accurately captured.
- **Inclusive and accessible**
Engagement will meet diverse community voices where they are and in a way that allows them to participate fully.
- **Accountable**
Engagement will ensure community and stakeholders have clear oversight through continuous communication. Council will be accountable for closing the loop and ensuring community and stakeholders are kept informed at all stages of the project lifecycle.

Actions

Council will uphold the key principles of meaningful community engagement by adopting the following actions (based on input from staff and community stakeholder consultation). It is important to note that due consideration is to be given to budget and resource limitations in delivering these actions.

1. Build staff capacity

We will:

1. Provide IAP2 training to managers and other relevant staff.
2. Develop a community engagement toolkit that includes planning and reporting templates to support staff and standardise engagement across the organisation.
3. Identify and train engagement champions across Council teams to support the work of Council's Communications and Engagement Team.
4. Provide embedded community engagement training into staff onboarding and ongoing professional development to ensure all staff understand Council's commitment to best-practice engagement.
5. Develop an approvals process to ensure engagement processes meet internal, legislative and accessibility requirements.

2. Meet community where they are

We will:

1. Clearly communicate and promote engagement opportunities through various mediums, e.g. local newspapers, regular Council e-newsletters, Council website, Council social media, rates notice, etc.
2. Offer a range of face-to-face, online and paper-based engagement opportunities for people to engage with Council decisions in various ways.
3. Develop an engagement calendar to meet community where they are and streamline engagement activities across the organisation ([see Appendix 1](#) for the proposed Community Engagement Schedule).
4. Explore digital engagement platforms to enhance accessibility and broaden community reach, including online polls that provide feedback by design.
5. Build on existing community networks and identify community champions to drive engagement with communities of place, identity, interest and need.
6. Collaborate with youth and other underrepresented groups to co-design and implement engagement activities that are relevant and accessible to them.

3. Close the loop

We will:

1. Develop processes to close the loop in a variety of ways, including Council reporting, website, email, social media and other mediums, with a focus on explaining how and when community feedback was considered in the decision-making process.
2. Continually develop and improve Council's community engagement practises and capacity through regular review and evaluation.
3. Assess engagement activities' effectiveness against the Strategy's principles and the diversity, equity and inclusion objectives.
4. Assess engagement activities effectiveness against the Community Engagement Strategy's objective and principles including diversity, equity and inclusion, and in contributing towards the Community Strategic Plan's outcomes and strategies.
5. Monitor community sentiment via a range of mediums e.g. social media monitoring, a demographic "community satisfaction" survey of Kiama Municipality, feedback from workshops, community events, committees and community groups.

See [Appendix 2](#) for the Strategy Evaluation Metrics.

Engaging with community

Council, commits to engaging with a broad cross-section of the community. The community includes many stakeholders, which means Council needs to understand and balance their diverse interests, priorities and needs. When planning community engagement, Council will analyse the stakeholders and target those who might be interested in, impacted by or benefit from a plan, project or decision. The key stakeholders are broadly described below:

Key stakeholders

Stakeholders	Description
Residents and ratepayers	Anybody who lives and/or pays rates in the Kiama Local Government Area (LGA)
Kiama's future	Kiama's young people who will lead the area in the future
Communities of place	Location-based communities (towns, neighbourhoods, streets)
Communities of interest	Communities that share activities, events or interests
Communities of identity	People of all ages, backgrounds, gender identities and religions
Communities of need	Kiama residents most vulnerable to the impact of decisions such as those experiencing or at risk of homelessness, those with different abilities, people from non-English speaking backgrounds, those who rent and those immediately impacted by disasters
Schools and education providers	Primary and secondary educational institutions and early learning providers
Business community	Kiama businesses, business networks and associations
Community participants	Those who use or access council facilities such as libraries, parks and recreation centres
Community organisations and groups	Council Committees, precincts and associations, interagency networks, community, religious and faith-based organisations, voluntary groups, and sporting and recreation clubs
NSW and Federal government departments/agencies	State and Commonwealth departments and agencies with impacting plans or information
Neighbouring councils and representative bodies	Surrounding local government areas and joint organisations such as ISJO, NSW Office of Local Government (NSWOLG)
Councillors	Nine elected representatives of Council
Council Staff	All employees of Council, including, contractors and volunteers
Visitors and tourists	Those who visit the Kiama LGA

Diversity, equity and inclusion

Council is committed to strengthening the diverse voices of our community. We aim to provide inclusive and equitable engagement processes, ensuring that anybody who wants or needs to participate can do so. Through this strategy, Council reaffirms its commitment to engage with:

- Young people
- Elderly people
- Families and single-parent households
- Aboriginal and Torres Strait Island communities
- People with disabilities
- People from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds
- LGBTQIA+ communities, and;
- Low-income households.

Council will support community participation, accessibility and inclusion by providing:

- Plain English and multi-modal information that meets accessibility requirements and provide key documents in Easy Read format,
- Multiple ways to provide input and feedback, including face-to-face, online, and paper-based engagement options, and;
Translated documents as requested or required.

Decision making

Community views, ideas and local knowledge are an important part of the decision-making process. Other things Council needs to consider include:

- Budget or financial impact
- Legislation (State and Federal)
- Council policies and resolutions (endorsed by our elected representatives)
- Evidence provided by technical and professional assessment and industry best practice, and;
- Economic, environmental, social and governance impacts.

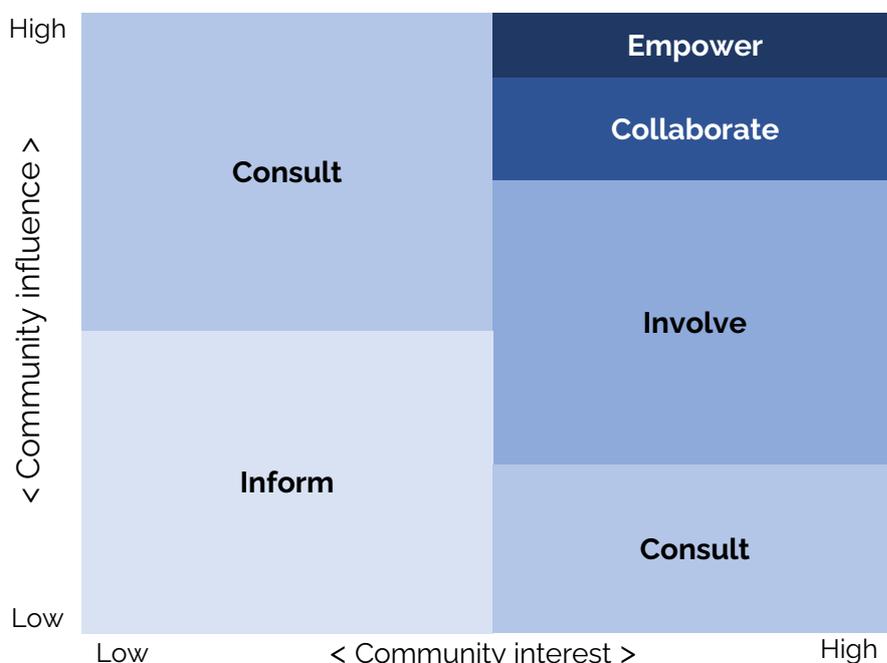
Council Strategies and Action Plans

Council delivers several strategies, policies and action plans to guide the delivery of its services and operations. These will guide what projects are undertaken through Council's Delivery Program, and inform the design and delivery of engagement programs, including:

- Community Strategic Plan (2022-2032)
- Community Participation Plan (2019)
- Committees Framework Policy (2023)
- Community Development Strategy (under development)
- Disability Inclusion Action Plan (2023-2027)
- Reconciliation Action Plan (under development)
- Cultural Plan (under development)
- Growth and Housing Strategy (under development)
- Economic Development Strategy (Under development)
- Tourism and Events Plan (2022-2026)
- Corporate Emissions Reduction Plan (Net Zero Strategy) 2021-2031
- Service Reviews
- Performance Improvement Order
- Strategic Finance and Governance Improvement Plan (under development)

Community engagement opportunities

Community engagement is undertaken when there is an opportunity for impacted communities to influence specific actions, outcomes or decisions, or when there is a legislative requirement to do so. The following matrix allows project teams to determine if engagement is required, to what degree, and which stakeholders will need to be engaged.



Note: If community engagement is not required or desired, Council should inform the community about the action, outcome or decision being made.

Roles and responsibilities

Many stakeholders play a role in delivering meaningful community engagement. While the Strategy is focused on Council's role, it is important to acknowledge that the participation of many stakeholders will influence its overall success.

Stakeholder	Roles and responsibilities
Mayor and Councillors	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Participate as an elected member, listen to the views of the community and consider those views when making decisions. Play an important role in reflecting the views of the community back to the staff ensuring that concerns and aspirations are heard. Support community engagement by approving adequate funding and/or resources.
CEO and Directors	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ensure the strategy is implemented and applied across Council projects. Oversee engagement processes of Council and ensure engagement needs and risks are considered. Approve Community Engagement Plans developed by Project Lead and provided by Managers.

Stakeholder	Roles and responsibilities
CEO and Directors (cont'd)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Report and communicate community engagement activities and outcomes (as provided by Managers) to elected members.
Managers and Coordinators	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Maintain an 'engagement mindset' when overseeing projects, plans, and activities in their team. Support teams to prioritise the 4 stages – design, plan, implement and close the loop – of community engagement activities. Ensure engagement activities within their team are communicated to elected members through the CEO and Directors.
Project Lead	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Community engagement is the responsibility of all Council staff who deliver projects or services that impact the community. Work with the Community Engagement Officer and use the Community Engagement Toolkit to prepare engagement plans, deliver activities, and report back on engagement outcomes, including adequate feedback to community.
Community Engagement Officer	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Train and guide staff to ensure a consistent, best-practice, and evaluated approach to community engagement activities. Develop a Community Engagement Toolkit, including templates available to all staff. Develop and manage an engagement schedule (see Appendix 1) to streamline engagement activities across Council Manage a Community Engagement Register. Collaborate closely with the Community Hubs Manager to leverage existing networks and engagement opportunities and to ensure diversity and inclusion principles are met.
Communications Officer	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Work with the Community Engagement Officer and project teams to create communications plans for engagement activities. Contribute to the Community Engagement Register. Provide advice on appropriate communication methods to promote engagement opportunities and outcomes.
Manager Communications & Engagement	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Manage this Strategy's implementation, including quarterly reporting on the Community Engagement plans, schedule and register. Checking final engagement plans.
Community (see key stakeholders table p10)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Responsible for contributing to the decision-making processes available to them, including staying informed about engagement opportunities, considering the information or options available, providing timely feedback, participating respectfully, and considering the ideas of others.

Four-stage engagement framework

The following engagement framework is used by Council to design, plan, implement and report on community engagement activities. This framework ensures that engagement processes are **meaningful** and **measurable**, promoting consistent, best-practise engagement across the organisation. In addition to the steps below, Kiama Council's Engagement team will develop a Community Engagement Toolkit to assist staff throughout the four stages of this framework. It is important to note that due consideration is to be given to budget and resource limitations in delivering engagement activities.

1. Design

Engagement design lays the groundwork for effective community engagement processes. In this stage, project teams will prepare an **engagement brief** that outlines the context and scope of the engagement and identifies key stakeholders.

<p>Context</p>	<p>Understanding the project context will help determine the purpose of engagement and integrate it into the broader project delivery plan.</p> <p>Questions to consider:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> What is the plan, policy, program or activity being delivered, why is it being delivered and who is responsible for delivering it? <input type="checkbox"/> What is the final project action, outcome or decision that must be made and who is in charge of making it? <input type="checkbox"/> Who will be the Project Lead, in charge of preparing engagement plans, delivering activities, and reporting back on engagement outcomes? <input type="checkbox"/> Why is community engagement required or desired? <input type="checkbox"/> What project milestones and dates are critical to meet? <input type="checkbox"/> Are there any timeframes, issues or assumptions that may impact the project?
<p>Scope</p>	<p>The engagement scope defines the extent of community engagement required. It identifies what can and cannot be influenced, helping to manage expectations.</p> <p>Questions to consider:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> What actions, outcomes or decisions can community influence and what cannot be changed? (negotiables and non-negotiables) <input type="checkbox"/> Is there a legislative requirement to fulfil? <input type="checkbox"/> How will community input be used in determining the final action, outcome or decision? <input type="checkbox"/> What information does Council require from community to inform next steps and decision-making? E.g. what question/s are being answered by engaging?
<p>Stakeholders</p>	<p>Identifying stakeholders is essential to establishing the level/s of engagement required. It ensures engagement seeks a diversity of community voices.</p> <p>Questions to consider:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Who will be impacted or affected by the action, outcome or decision? <input type="checkbox"/> Who has an interest in the action, outcome or decision? <input type="checkbox"/> Which voices need to be strengthened? (diversity, equity and inclusion)

The following stakeholder analysis chart assists in identifying the community segments and/or individuals to be engaged, and determining the appropriate level/s of engagement based on:

- The impact of the action, outcome or decision on the individual or group
- The level of interest they have in the project
- The level of influence they have over the action, outcome or decision.

Stakeholders	Impact	Interest	Influence	Engagement
Segment 1	Low/medium /high	Low/medium/ high	Low/medium/ high	<i>Inform/Consult/ Involve/Collaborate /Empower</i>
Segment 2				
Segment 3				
Segment 4				
Segment 5				

2. Plan

Engagement planning is essential to delivering meaningful and measurable community engagement. In this phase, project teams will prepare an **engagement plan** that details the methods to be used and the resources required to undertake community engagement activities.

Schedule	<p>Understanding where community engagement fits within the broader project plan helps guide the selection and sequencing of appropriate engagement methods.</p> <p>Questions to consider:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> When in the delivery of the project is community input required or desired? <input type="checkbox"/> What key delivery milestones must be met? <input type="checkbox"/> What project or task dependencies should be considered in the planning of engagement activities?
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Activities

Engagement methods/activities are selected to correspond with the determined level of stakeholder engagement. This may mean selecting different activities for different groups.

They should be selected with due consideration to the project budget, timeframe, scale and complexity, and legislative requirements, among other factors.

Activities should be designed to meet community where they are, ensuring community preferences and expectations are considered. Equitable and inclusive engagement opportunities must be provided to ensure a diversity of voices are heard.

Questions to consider:

- What are the *project objectives* and what are the *engagement objectives*?
- What *outputs* are required from community to achieve these objectives?
- What are the best *activities* to generate these outputs?

Other key considerations:

- What support materials are required to deliver engagement? e.g. communications plan, risk management plan
- How will engagement outputs (data) be collected, analysed and reported?
- What measures will support diverse voices to participate in the activity/activities?
- How and when will the community be informed of progress, outcomes, how input was used and fulfilment of commitments to close the loop? Consider timely, tailored and regular communication (see Continuous Communication p19).

Resourcing

A detailed **implementation plan** will identify resources required to deliver engagement, and determine roles and responsibilities for undertaking key tasks.

Questions to consider:

- What tasks must be performed to prepare for engagement?
- What tangible and human resources are required to deliver the engagement?
- Who is responsible for coordinating these tasks and resources? (see [Roles and Responsibilities](#) p12)
- Who is responsible for capturing the engagement data and preparing the engagement report?
- Identify budget for engagement activities

Engagement Methods Matrix

The following methods matrix provides an overview of common communication and engagement activities and tools.

As mentioned above, engagement methods are selected with due consideration to the level of engagement, project budget, timeframe, scale and complexity, and legislative requirements, among other factors.

	Inform	Consult	Involve	Collaborate	Empower
Council website	X				
Council e-newsletter (Kimunico)	X				
Social media	X				
Media release	X				
Local newspapers	X				
Rates notices	X				
Letters and email notifications	X				
Letter-box drops	X				
Posters, pamphlets, flyers	X				
Outdoor signage	X				
Print or digital factsheets and FAQs	X				
Door-knocking	X	X			
Presentation, meeting or briefing (in-person, phone or virtual)	X	X			
Online or printed survey		X			
Opinion poll		X			
Community pop-ups		X			
Comment, compliment, complaint form		X			
Online discussion board		X			
Calls for submission		X			
Council meetings or town hall engagements		X			
'Your Say' interactive website		X	X		
Citizen science (e.g. wildlife reporting)		X	X		
Reference or advisory groups		X	X	X	
Committees or Special councils (eg: 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	X
Consensus conference				X	X
Voting					X
Citizens jury					X

3. Implement

Implementation involves the delivery and monitoring of engagement activities to ensure activities align with project objectives. It also involves the processes for collecting and collating data.

<p>Activation</p>	<p>Activation includes (a) preparing project teams to deliver engagement and (b) promoting engagement activities to community. The implementation plan will identify what actions need to take place in this phase (e.g. coordinate venues, liaise with key stakeholders, distribute promotional materials)</p> <p>Questions to consider:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Do staff (a) understand their role and responsibilities in delivering engagement and (b) have the resources required to undertake engagement activities? <input type="checkbox"/> Do community know (a) what the engagement is about (b) when and where engagement will take place and (c) how to participate?
<p>Delivery and monitoring</p>	<p>Engagement delivery should involve ongoing monitoring to ensure activities align with objectives, resourcing, and required outputs. Activities may need to be adapted or refined, or additional processes may need to be included.</p> <p>Questions to consider:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Are project and activity objectives being achieved? <input type="checkbox"/> Are attendance numbers/participation rates meeting expectations? <input type="checkbox"/> What is the level of participant diversity? Is anybody <i>not</i> participating who might want or need to? <input type="checkbox"/> Do engagement outputs meet data requirements? <input type="checkbox"/> Are outputs being appropriately collected and documented? <input type="checkbox"/> What is the public/media response if any? <input type="checkbox"/> Are there enough/appropriate resources to continue?
<p>Analysis</p>	<p>Raw outputs collected during engagement are to be collated and analysed to report on findings, make recommendations and/or inform decision-making (as determined by the level of engagement).</p> <p>Questions to consider:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> What were the key themes and/or findings across all engagement activities? <input type="checkbox"/> What additional insights were discovered? <p>*To protect the privacy of participants, data is to be de-identified unless express consent is given to the sharing of personal details.</p>

4. Close the loop

Reviewing, evaluating and reporting on engagement is critical to promoting transparency, accountability and integrity in engagement processes. This stage involves preparing and delivering **engagement reports** for decision-makers, project delivery teams and the community.

Report	<p>The engagement report documents the entire engagement process, from design to data analysis, and presents engagement findings and insights. It may make recommendations or guide next steps. The report is shared with project teams, decision-makers and the community.</p> <p>Engagement reports will generally be included within Council reports. For ease of access, summaries will also be made publicly available for community and other stakeholders to view.</p> <p>Questions to consider:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><input type="checkbox"/> Who participated in the engagement and how?<input type="checkbox"/> What did stakeholders say? (themes, findings, insights)<input type="checkbox"/> How stakeholder input was used in the decision-making process?<input type="checkbox"/> What other evidence was considered?
Review	<p>An engagement review is undertaken as part of continuous improvement. It evaluates the effectiveness of engagement processes, activities, outcomes and resourcing, among other factors. This report is shared internally with engagement teams to reflect and debrief on learnings.</p>

Continuous communication

For best outcomes, community should be kept informed as engagement activities progress. Continuous communication serves to manage expectations and improve trust by ensuring the engagement process is open and transparent. How continuous communication is implemented will depend on the level, scale and timeframe for engagement, and will be embedded into engagement planning.

Methods may include:

- Sharing of engagement schedules, objectives and agendas
- Acknowledging and thanking community for their time and input
- Feeding back to participants after each engagement activity (sense checking)
- Preparing interim reports at key delivery milestones
- Providing regular updates online (web, social media, email), in print (newsletter, newspaper), or in person (briefings)
- Providing additional information/communications if needed
- Providing channels for community to get in touch
- Responding to community questions or inquiries in a timely manner

Appendix 1: Community Engagement Schedule

Council is committed to engaging the community and stakeholders on decisions that affect them, and meeting people where they are to engage with a diversity of voices. Community pop-ups, where Council staff are stationed at various high-traffic locations across the Municipality during peak times, offer a casual setting for residents to chat with Council staff throughout the year.

These events are typically scheduled for the week following an Ordinary Council meeting, which occurs on the third Tuesday of the month. This timing allows community members to provide input on plans, policies, and strategies that have been placed on public exhibition or opened for consultation. This schedule will be complemented by online engagement opportunities and targeted stakeholder-holder engagement activities, such as workshops, focus groups and meetings with committees and community groups.

Month	Township	Location	Date	Time
July	Kiama	Kiama Topshop	Wed 24 Jul	9am - 11am
	Jamberoo	Jamberoo Football Club	Thu 25 Jul	3pm - 5pm
Aug	Note: No pop-ups due to the local government election caretaker period			
September	Minnamurra CRC - Waste Depot	Household Bulky Waste Event	Sat 14 Sep (Election Day)	8am - 4pm
	Minnamurra CRC - Waste Depot	Household Bulky Waste Event	Sun 15 Sep	8am - 4pm
October	Kiama	Kiama Library	Tue 30 Oct	10am - 12pm
	Kiama Downs	Oztag, Gainsborough Oval	Wed 31 Oct	4pm - 6pm
November	Kiama	Kiama Leisure Centre	Thu 28 Nov	3pm - 6pm
	Gerringong	Gerringong IGA	Fri 29 Nov	3pm - 5pm
December	Kiama	Kiama Farmers Market	Wed 18 Dec	3pm - 6pm
	Kiama	Alchemy Chorus, Uniting Church	Thu 19 Dec	10am-12pm
January	Kiama	Kiama Show	Fri 24 Jan	8pm - 4pm
	Jamberoo	Jamberoo Pool	Thu 30 Jan	3pm - 5pm
February	Kiama	Kiama Blue Haven	Tue 25 Feb	10am - 12pm
	Kiama Downs	Kiama Downs IGA	Thu 27 Feb	3pm - 5pm
March	Minnamurra CRC - Waste Depot	Household Bulky Waste Event	TBC	8am - 4pm
	Minnamurra CRC - Waste Depot	Household Bulky Waste Event	TBC	8am - 4pm
April	Kiama	Kiama Woolworths	Tue 29 Apr	5pm - 7pm
	Gerringong	Gerringong Library	Wed 30 Apr	10am - 12pm
May	Kiama	AFL training, Bonaira Oval	Tue 27 May	3pm - 5pm
	Gerringong	Uniting Mayflower	Wed 28 May	10am-12pm
June	Kiama	Kiama Farmers Market	Wed 25 Jun	2pm - 5pm
	Jamberoo	Jamberoo IGA	Thu 26 Jun	4pm - 6pm

Note¹: We will review and adjust this pop-up schedule throughout the year to ensure it remains effective and continues to meet community where they are.

Note²: Saturdays and Sundays are actively avoided if alternative options are available during the week due to Council budget limitations.

Appendix 2: Evaluation Metrics

1. Build staff capacity

Actions	Measure	Target	Timeline
1. Provide IAP2 training to managers and other relevant staff.	No. of staff provided with IAP2 training	4 staff until all relevant staff are qualified	Yearly ongoing – as staff turnover and require refresher training
2. Develop a Community Engagement Toolkit that includes planning and reporting templates to support staff and standardise engagement across the organisation.	Development of Community engagement toolkit	Complete toolkit	2024-25
	No. of staff utilising the toolkit/no. of engagements	80% of engagements	Yearly
3. Identify and train "Engagement Champions" across Council teams to support the work of Council's Communications and Engagement Team.	No. of champions identified and trained	4 staff in line with above action	Yearly
4. Provide embedded community engagement training into staff onboarding, and ongoing professional development, to ensure all staff understand Council's commitment to best-practice engagement.	Development of community engagement training module	Complete training module	2025-26
	No. of staff completed community engagement onboarding training	20% of new recruits	Yearly
5. Develop an approvals process to ensure engagement processes meet internal, legislative and accessibility requirements.	Development of approval process	Complete of the approval process	February 2025

2. Meet community where they are

Actions	Measure	Target	Timeline
1. Clearly communicate and promote engagement opportunities through various mediums, e.g. local newspapers, regular Council e-newsletters, Council website, Council social media, rates notice, etc.	Promotion of engagement opportunities incl. mediums and reach	TBC based on baseline	Continuously
2. Offer a range of face-to-face, online and paper-based engagement opportunities for people to engage with Council decisions in various ways.	Offering a mix of face-to-face, online and paper-based engagement opportunities	Where suitable or required Demonstrate a mix of	Continuously
3. Develop an Engagement Schedule to streamline engagement across the organisation and meet community where they are.	Development of Engagement Schedule	Engagement Schedule created No. of community members engaged	Included in this Strategy, to be reviewed yearly
4. Explore digital engagement platforms to enhance accessibility and broaden community reach, including online polls that provide feedback by design.	Develop a business case for the acquisition of a Digital Engagement Platform. Implementation and uptake of Digital Engagement Platform	Business case completion + implementation	2025-26
5. Build on existing community networks and identify community champions to drive engagement with communities of place, identity, interest and need.	Develop and maintain a stakeholder map for internal use	Completion, regular review	Review yearly
6. Collaborate with youth and other underrepresented groups to co-design and implement engagement activities that are relevant and accessible to them.	No. of co-design engagements Strengthen the diversity of voices	TBC based on baseline	Continuously

3. Close the loop

Actions	Measure	Target	Timeline
1. Develop processes to close the loop in a variety of ways, including Council reporting, website, email, social media and other mediums, with a focus on explaining how and when community feedback was considered in the decision-making process.	Develop processes to close the loop sufficiently on engagement activities Evaluation of the effectiveness of the process based on sentiment	Development of process TBC based on baseline	2024-2025 2025-2026
2. Continually develop and improve Council's community engagement practises and capacity through regular review and evaluation.	Review and evaluate engagement activities	Review with relevant departments	June 2025
3. Assess engagement activities effectiveness against the Community Engagement Strategy's objective and principles including diversity, equity and inclusion, and in contributing towards the Community Strategic Plan's outcomes and strategies.	Review and evaluate engagement activities	TBC based on baseline	Yearly
4. Monitor community sentiment via a range of mediums e.g. social media monitoring, a demographic "community satisfaction" survey of Kiama Municipality, feedback from workshops, community events, committees and community groups.	Undertaking of a demographic "community satisfaction" survey	Completion of survey	2025-2026

Authorisation and version control

Owner/Responsible Officer	Manager Communications & Engagement
Department	Office of CEO
Date adopted/endorsed	18 June 2024
Resolution number (if applicable)	24/184OC
Next review date	By 31 December 2024
TRIM reference	24/68009

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

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