

# Kiama

## Visitor Economy Strategy

2035



KIAMA MUNICIPAL COUNCIL  
your council, your community

DESTINATION

**Kiama**  
SOUTH COAST N.S.W. AUSTRALIA

## Authorisation

|                           |                                          |
|---------------------------|------------------------------------------|
| Owner/Responsible Officer | Manager Tourism and Economic Development |
| Department                | Strategies and Communities               |
| Date endorsed             |                                          |
| Council Resolution number |                                          |
| Next review date          |                                          |
| TRIM reference            |                                          |

## Review and version control

The Strategy should be reviewed every five years.

| Date endorsed | Brief detail of amendments |
|---------------|----------------------------|
| [date]        | [insert detail here]       |
| [date]        | [insert detail here]       |
| [date]        | [insert detail here]       |
| [date]        | [insert detail here]       |
| [date]        | [insert detail here]       |

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## Acknowledgement of Country

Kiama Municipal Council acknowledges the Wodi Wodi people of Dharawal Country as the Traditional Custodians of the land on which our Municipality is located, "Kiarama."

We value and celebrate Dharawal culture and language, and acknowledge the Wodi Wodi people's continuing connection to the land, the sea and the community.

We pay our respects to Elders past, present and emerging, and through them, to all First Nations peoples' history, culture and voices.

## PART 1: Introduction – Kiama’s Visitor Economy

Kiama is a distinctive coastal–hinterland destination on Dharawal Country, where dramatic geology, rich cultural heritage and creative village life combine to create an unmistakable sense of place. In 2024, the visitor economy welcomed over 1.2 million visitors and generated more than \$390 million in direct expenditure. Domestic overnight stays remain strong, day-trip visitation is robust, and consecutive recognition as NSW Top Tourism Town (2024 and 2025) reflects both appeal and momentum.

### **Why a Strategy now**

Visitor expectations are shifting, competition is intensifying, and the community’s expectations for sustainability, liveability and shared value are clearer than ever. Kiama’s seasonal pattern presents untapped capacity in the shoulder and winter periods, while peak times bring pressure on access, amenity and coastal environments. Product depth, bookability and precinct activation can be strengthened, particularly across wellness, agritourism, marine and Aboriginal tourism – alongside a more vibrant, safe and coordinated night-time economy.

### **Purpose and scope**

The Kiama Visitor Economy Strategy 2035 (KVES) provides a practical framework to manage growth and protect place character while delivering benefits for residents, businesses and visitors. It sets the vision and strategic goals, identifies seven focus areas to guide investment and experience development, and defines Council’s roles as Deliver, Partner and Advocate. Implementation is phased (short/medium/long-term), integrated with Council’s Delivery Program and Operational Plan, and supported by clear governance, including quarterly reporting to the Tourism & Economic Advisory Committee and annual public reporting.

A commitment to data-led decision making underpins this Strategy, providing a consistent evidence base for investment, programming and destination management, and ensuring outcomes deliver shared value for residents, visitors and industry.

### **How the Strategy is organised**

- Part 1: Introduction
- Part 2: Situation Analysis – market context, strengths, gaps, opportunities and risks.
- Part 3: Vision, Goals and Guiding Principles that anchor decision-making.
- Part 4: Focus Areas – destination brand & marketing; experiences & product development; infrastructure & access; industry skills & partnership growth; night-time & cultural economy activation; each supporting one or more of the identified goals.
- Part 5: Action Plan – prioritised projects with roles, timeframes and resourcing.
- Part 6: Monitoring, Evaluation & Governance – performance, reporting and adaptive management.

*Throughout this Strategy, references to Dharawal Country recognise the Wodi Wodi people as the Traditional Owners and custodians of this land.*

## 1.1 Executive Summary

Kiama's visitor economy is a cornerstone of local prosperity and identity. In 2024, Kiama welcomed more than 1.2 million visitors, generating over \$390 million in direct expenditure. Domestic overnight stays remain strong (average 3.3 nights), day-trip visitation is robust, and consecutive recognition as NSW Top Tourism Town in 2024 and 2025 cements Kiama's reputation as a destination of choice.

Just 90 minutes south of Sydney on the Grand Pacific Drive, Kiama is a compact (257 km<sup>2</sup>), diverse region where dramatic coastline, rolling hinterland, and creative communities create a distinctive sense of place. From Minnamurra and Gerroa to Gerringong and Jamberoo, these lands, cared for by the Dharawal people for countless generations, offer iconic experiences such as the Kiama Blowhole, alongside vibrant events, boutique retail, quality food and produce, surf culture, and emerging wellness and agritourism.

### Why this Strategy matters

Kiama's success brings both opportunity and responsibility. Seasonal patterns provide a strong platform for growth, yet challenges such as peak-season congestion, accommodation diversity, and workforce constraints require proactive management. At the same time, gaps in off-peak product and bookability limit year-round performance. This Strategy responds by setting a clear framework for sustainable growth that protects Kiama's character and delivers shared value for residents and businesses.

The Kiama Visitor Economy Strategy 2035 provides a vision for a sustainable, high-value visitor economy that enhances community wellbeing and safeguards the environment.

The Strategy highlights five strategic goals

1. Grow High-Value Visitation
2. Diversify Experiences and Markets
3. Enhance Infrastructure and Accessibility
4. Build Industry Capability and Workforce
5. Activate the Night-Time and Cultural Economy

That are delivered through five focus areas:

1. Destination Brand & Marketing  
*(Deliver compelling campaigns, strengthen brand positioning, and leverage digital channels)*
2. Experience & Product Development  
*(Curate and innovate visitor experiences and signature events to drive dispersal and seasonality)*
3. Infrastructure, Access & Sustainability  
*(Advocate and collaborate on transport, signage, and visitor amenity upgrades)*
4. Industry Skills & Partnerships  
*(Upskill operators, foster collaboration, and build workforce resilience)*
5. Night-Time & Cultural Economy  
*(Support cultural programming, a Night-Time Economy Strategy, and promote evening experiences)*

It includes a phased Action Plan (short, medium, long-term) with Council roles to deliverer, partner, or advocate and is designed to integrate with Kiama Council's Delivery Program and Operational Plan, supported by quarterly reporting to The Tourism and Economic Advisory Committee (TEAC) and annual public reporting.

The plan ensures alignment with the NSW Visitor Economy Strategy 2035, the NSW 24-hour Economy Strategy, and the Destination Sydney Surrounds South Destination Management Plan, ensuring regional collaboration and market reach.

By 2035, Kiama will be recognised as a sustainable, culturally rich destination where visitors stay longer, spend more, and contribute to a thriving local economy and vibrant community life.

The **Kiama Visitor Economy Strategy 2035** provides a vision for a sustainable, high-value visitor economy that enhances community wellbeing and safeguards the environment.



**1.2 million**

visitors



**3.3 night**

average domestic  
stay



**\$390m**

direct expenditure

### Strategic Goals:



**Grow High-Value  
Visitation**



**Diversify  
Experiences and  
Markets**



**Enhance  
Infrastructure  
and Accessibility**



**Build Industry  
Capability and  
Workforce**



**Activate the  
Night-Time and  
Cultural  
Economy**

### Five focus areas:



#### **Destination Brand & Marketing**

Deliver compelling campaigns, strengthen brand positioning, and leverage digital channels



#### **Experience & Product Development**

Curate and innovate visitor experiences and signature events to drive dispersal and seasonality



#### **Infrastructure, Access & Sustainability**

Advocate and collaborate on transport, signage, and visitor amenity upgrades



#### **Industry Skills & Partnerships**

Upskill operators, foster collaboration, and build workforce resilience



#### **Night-Time & Cultural Economy**

Support cultural programming, a Night-Time Economy Strategy, and promote evening experiences

### Vision for the Kiama Visitor Economy:

By 2035, the Kiama area will be recognised as a sustainable, culturally rich destination where visitors stay longer, spend more, and contribute to a thriving local economy and vibrant community life.

## 1.2 Policy and Context

Kiama Municipality sits within the Illawarra-Shoalhaven region on the NSW South Coast, bordered by Shoalhaven, Shellharbour and Wingecarribee Council areas. Kiama township is the administrative and visitor hub, supported by distinctive coastal and hinterland villages including Gerringong, Gerroa, Jamberoo, Kiama Downs and Minnamurra.



### 1.2.1 Regional Collaboration

Kiama works closely with Destination Sydney Surrounds South (DSSS), one of seven Destination Networks funded by Destination NSW (DNSW), to coordinate growth of the Sydney Surrounds South visitor economy. The region comprises Kiama, Shellharbour, Shoalhaven, Wollongong and Wingecarribee (Southern Highlands), each contributing projects and priorities to support sustainable regional outcomes.

### 1.2.2 Transport Context

North–south connectivity via the Princes Highway and South Coast Train Line links Kiama to Sydney and Canberra markets and international gateways, underpinning its role as a short-break destination and a key stop on the Grand Pacific Drive. East–west access remains limited, requiring ongoing advocacy to improve connections.

### 1.2.3 Strategic Alignment

The Kiama Visitor Economy Strategy 2035 (KVES) aligns with the NSW Visitor Economy Strategy 2035, the NSW 24-Hour Economy Strategy, and the Destination Sydney Surrounds South (DSSS) Destination Management Plan. It also builds on Council’s previous local strategies, including the Tourism & Events Strategic Plan 2022–2026 and the Tourism Opportunities Plan (TOP) 2018–2028. Consecutive recognition as NSW Top Tourism Town in 2024 and 2025 underscores Kiama’s momentum and the importance of maintaining a clear, long-term strategic focus.

As part of this alignment, Council plays an active advocacy role in shaping regional economic and visitor-related priorities. The visitor economy intersects with infrastructure, workforce, transport, land-use planning, housing and regional development, and Council will continue to advance Kiama's priorities through state, regional and industry partners, including Business Illawarra, Regional Development Australia Illawarra Shoalhaven, Destination Sydney Surrounds South, and local Members and Ministers. Embedding Kiama's needs within regional and state strategies strengthens access to funding, elevates the municipality's profile, and ensures local priorities are reflected in broader economic development decision-making.

The Strategy is strongly aligned with Destination NSW's Visitor Economy Strategy 2035 and its five pillars to accelerate growth. It supports making it easier to visit through advocacy for aviation-led growth associated with Western Sydney International Airport, evidence-based accommodation planning, improved access, and workforce considerations linked to housing and capability. It focuses on attracting higher-value visitors through strengthened destination branding, bold place-based storytelling and data-led marketing, positioning Kiama as more than a day-trip or 'postcard' destination. Growth through events is addressed through a balanced approach that prioritises shoulder-season, cultural and business events to extend stays while managing peak-period impacts. Experience development is a central focus, with investment in immersive, high-quality and culturally rich offerings across nature-based, wellness, food, marine and Aboriginal visitor-ready experiences, guided by appropriate governance and cultural authority. Finally, the Strategy embeds data and insights through improved access to visitor data, performance monitoring and adaptive governance, ensuring decision-making remains agile, evidence-based and aligned with State priorities over the life of the Strategy.

### 1.3 Local Government Area Snapshot

**Geography:** Compact 257 km<sup>2</sup> coastal-hinterland municipality featuring iconic geological formations (Kiama Blowhole, Little Blowhole, Bombo Headland), beaches, rainforests and rural landscapes.

**Settlements:** Kiama township (administrative and visitor hub); villages of Gerringong, Gerroa, Jamberoo, Kiama Downs, Minnamurra.

**Visitor infrastructure:** Walkable town centres; the Kiama Coast Walk corridor; harbour precinct; visitor information services; and a diverse accommodation base, with supply concentrated in Kiama township.

**Identity:** Dharawal Country. Heritage, stories and contemporary culture underpin place authenticity and visitor appeal.



## Current population

In 2021, around 22,970 people called the Kiama LGA home. Our population is concentrated along the coastline in small towns as well as small hinterland villages. This population distribution is reflected in a diverse network of urban centres, coastal villages and hinterland communities, each with a distinct role, character and set of destination assets, as outlined below.



**Urban Environment**



**Coastal Environment**



**Hinterland Environment**

| Destination Profile             |                       |                                                                                                                                                                                                                     |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                         |                                                                                                                               |
|---------------------------------|-----------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Town                            | Population            | Assets                                                                                                                                                                                                              | Precinct Type                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                           |                                                                                                                               |
| Kiama & Kiama Heights           | 14,761<br>(SA1 7,909) | Kiama Blowhole & Little Blowhole; Lighthouse & harbour precinct; Visitor Information Centre at Blowhole Point; Kiama Coast(al) Walk hub; walkable heritage town centre. Train station servicing Sydney - Bomaderry. | <br><br>       | Urban Centre<br>Primary administrative & visitor hub (major town centre with harbour, information services, retail & dining). |
| Kiama Downs, Bombo & Minnamurra | 6,066                 | Coastal residential village framed by Minnamurra River mouth; access to Jones Beach/Cathedral Rocks and sections of the Coast Walk to Kiama. Train station at Minnamurra, servicing Sydney – Bomaderry.             | <br>                                                                                           | Coastal residential & recreation node (beaches, headlands, river mouth).                                                      |
| Gerringong                      | 4,165                 | Werri Beach & oceanfront reserve; surf appeal and boutiques in the main street; southern trailhead of the Kiama Coast Walk to Gerroa.                                                                               | <br><br> | Seaside village centre (surf beach focus, dining/retail).                                                                     |
| Gerroa                          | 571                   | Seven Mile Beach & National Park; Crooked River estuary; holiday parks and nature-based activities.                                                                                                                 |                                                                                                                                                                                    | Nature-based coastal village (beach/estuary gateway).                                                                         |
| Jamberoo                        | 1,910                 | Historic rural village; Jamberoo Action Park; hinterland gateway to rainforests & scenic drives.                                                                                                                    |                                                                                                                                                                                    | Hinterland village & day-trip anchor (family attractions, countryside touring).                                               |

Note: The demographic data in this section has been sourced from REMPLAN (2024).

## 1.4 Methodology and Stakeholder Engagement

This Strategy has been developed through a structured, evidence-led process that blends rigorous data analysis with meaningful input from community, industry and government partners. The approach balances credibility with local voice so the actions are both achievable and grounded in Kiama's priorities.

### 1.4.1 Methodology and Engagement

The methodology for this Strategy is structured, evidence-led and aligned with best-practice destination management. It draws on comprehensive data analysis, targeted field assessment and structured engagement with industry, community, partner agencies, the Tourism and Economic Advisory Committee (TEAC) and Traditional Owners to ensure the Strategy is robust, credible and grounded in local context.

The approach surfaced:

- Strong community support for tourism when growth is managed, with top desired outcomes being support for local business, local jobs, cultural vibrancy, infrastructure investment and environmental education.
- Clear gaps limiting visitor yield and experience: night-time economy, Harbour activation, Aboriginal cultural experiences, live music/arts, and pressure points around congestion/parking.
- There was broad support for streamlined approvals for year-round alfresco dining, pedestrian-friendly activation in retail areas, and coordinated Harbour precinct activation that improves visibility for marine operators.
- Distinctive experience opportunities to elevate Kiama's point of difference (geotourism at Blowhole Point and Bombo, soft-adventure/bouldering, Kiama Coast Walk extension and activation), alongside Visitor Information Centre (VIC) led pilot experiences to address bookability gaps.
- Visitor accommodation gaps and needs (including a premium offering at Blowhole Point and eco-retreat potential) to attract higher-yield segments and support mid-week demand.

A detailed description of the methodology and engagement program is provided in **Appendix A**.

### 1.4.2 Data Sources

This Strategy draws on:

- Tourism Research Australia (TRA) datasets presented through the Kiama Tourism Monitor (Peter Valerio), including origin market analysis (day-trip, domestic overnight, emerging international).
- Council reports and plans, community feedback channels and business engagement insights.
- External policy and market context, notably: NSW Visitor Economy Strategy 2035; Destination Sydney Surrounds South (DSSS) Destination Management Plan; NSW 24-Hour Economy Strategy; Kiama Regional Economic Development Strategy (REDS) 2023.
- Infrastructure and access context, including the planned opening of Western Sydney International (WSI) and its implications for international dispersal via the Grand Pacific Drive.
- Primary fieldwork, industry interviews and a community/resident survey.

### 1.4.3 Stakeholder Engagement Approach

Engagement was designed to be inclusive and purposeful, using the IAP2 spectrum to set the right level of involvement by audience:



#### Inform & Consult

broad community survey; public information via Council channels.



#### Involve

workshops/briefings with TEAC, industry clusters and precinct stakeholders.



#### Collaborate

targeted co-design discussions on priority projects (e.g., Harbour activation, night-time economy, Kiama Coast Walk activation).



#### Empower (ongoing)

commitment to continued partnership with Traditional Owners on First Nations cultural experiences and interpretation.

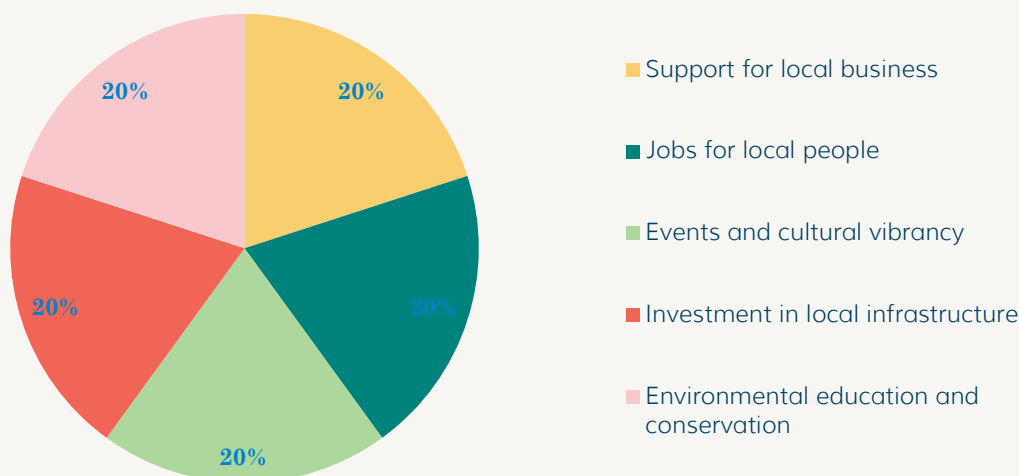
### 1.4.4 Who was Engaged

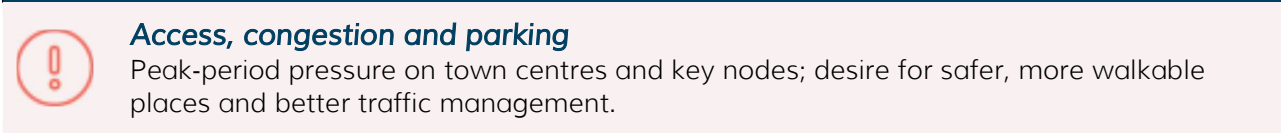
|                                                                                        |                                                                                                                                                         |                                                                                                              |
|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>Community</b><br>residents and regular visitors (survey sample 104).                | <b>Industry</b><br>accommodation providers; food & beverage; attractions and tour/transport operators; event organisers; retail; agritourism producers. | <b>Peak Partner Agencies</b><br>Destination NSW, Destination Sydney Surrounds South, trade distributors.     |
| <b>Business &amp; Advocacy</b><br>Kiama Business Network (KBN) and local associations. | <b>Council &amp; Governance</b><br>Councillors and staff; Tourism and Economic Advisory Committee (TEAC).                                               | <b>Traditional Owners</b><br>Engagement with Traditional Owners is ongoing and guided by cultural authority. |

### 1.4.5 Community Insights

Community sentiment towards tourism is generally positive and supportive of Council investing in the visitor economy, provided growth is well-managed and aligned to local values. Key signals of this included:

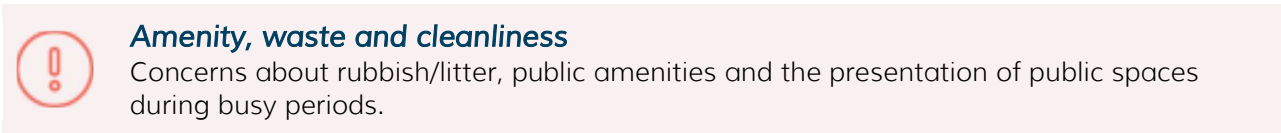
#### Top 5 desired outcomes





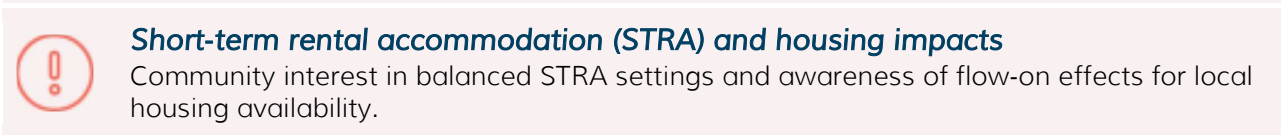
**Access, congestion and parking**  
Peak-period pressure on town centres and key nodes; desire for safer, more walkable places and better traffic management.

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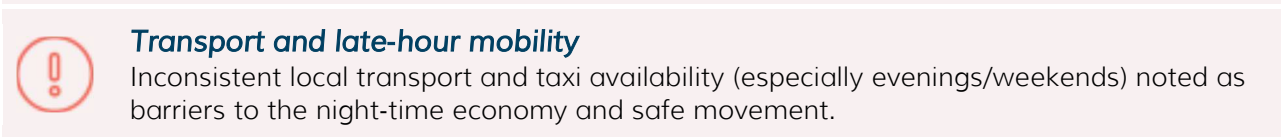
 **Amenity, waste and cleanliness**  
Concerns about rubbish/litter, public amenities and the presentation of public spaces during busy periods.

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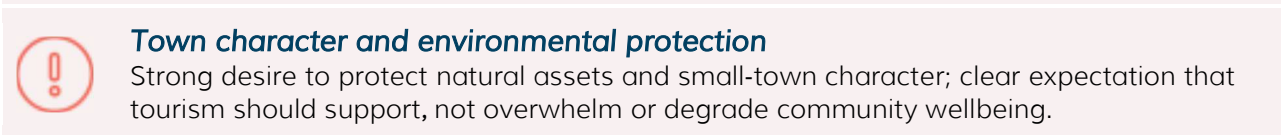
 **Short-term rental accommodation (STRA) and housing impacts**  
Community interest in balanced STRA settings and awareness of flow-on effects for local housing availability.

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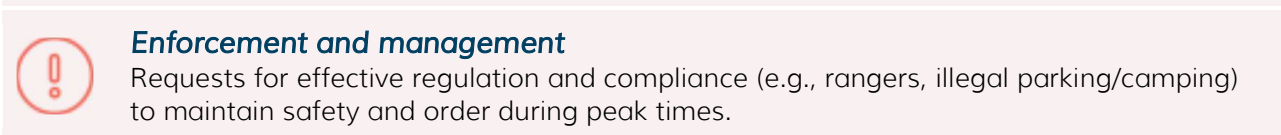
 **Transport and late-hour mobility**  
Inconsistent local transport and taxi availability (especially evenings/weekends) noted as barriers to the night-time economy and safe movement.

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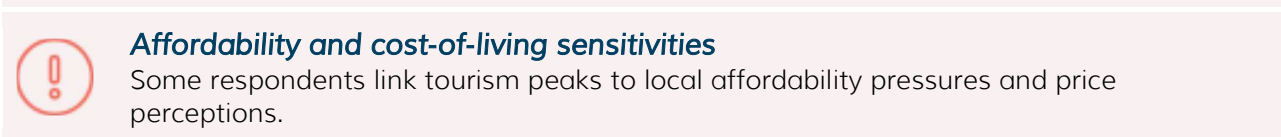
 **Town character and environmental protection**  
Strong desire to protect natural assets and small-town character; clear expectation that tourism should support, not overwhelm or degrade community wellbeing.

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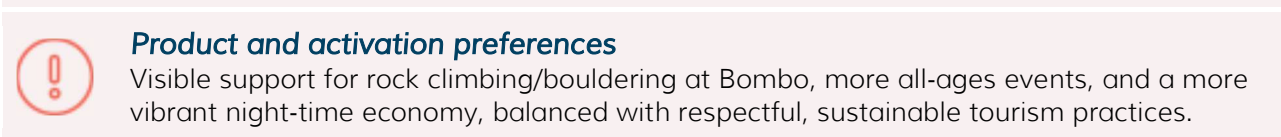
 **Enforcement and management**  
Requests for effective regulation and compliance (e.g., rangers, illegal parking/camping) to maintain safety and order during peak times.

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**Affordability and cost-of-living sensitivities**  
Some respondents link tourism peaks to local affordability pressures and price perceptions.

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 **Product and activation preferences**  
Visible support for rock climbing/bouldering at Bombo, more all-ages events, and a more vibrant night-time economy, balanced with respectful, sustainable tourism practices.

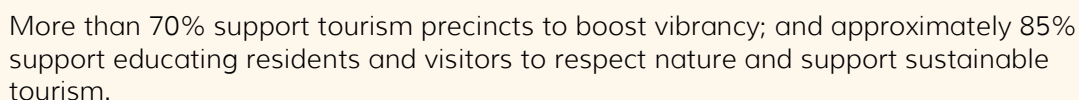
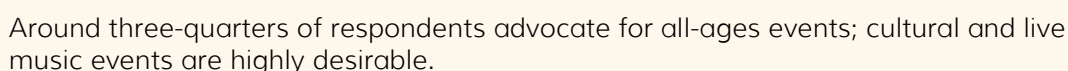
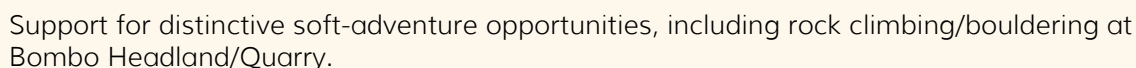
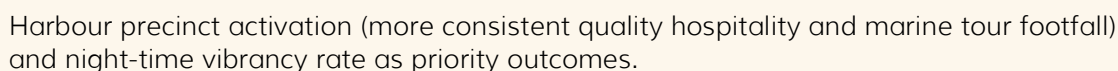
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Collectively, these themes inform a great deal of the Strategy's priorities with the Implementation and Action Plan in Section 5 of this document.

## Experiences: strengths and gaps

## Top experiences



### 1.4.6 How Engagement Shaped this Strategy

| What we heard                                                                                             | How the Strategy responds                                                                                                                                                                   |
|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <b><i>Congestion and parking erode experience at peak times; need safer, more walkable precincts.</i></b> | Precinct-based approach prioritising pedestrian movement, wayfinding and linger spaces; options for timed/seasonal 'pedestrianisation' and improved parking management in town centres.     |
| <b><i>Kiama Harbour lacks consistent activation after dark; marine tour visibility is limited.</i></b>    | Harbour Activation Plan actions: signature dining/entertainment anchor, improved links from Manning St, public art/lighting, and marine operator capability.                                |
| <b><i>Night-time economy is the biggest gap; families want more all-ages options.</i></b>                 | This Strategy supports the forthcoming Kiama After Dark Night-Time Economy Strategy (due October 2026) to guide safe, inclusive and community-supported twilight and night-time activation. |

| What we heard                                                                                                                                  | How the Strategy responds                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                     |
|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <b><i>Desire for distinctive, bookable experiences that reflect Kiama's natural/geological point of difference.</i></b>                        | Geotourism focus (Blowhole Point, Bombo Geological Precinct); feasibility for bouldering/soft-adventure; interpretive upgrades and all-weather viewing; curated walking/food/wellness experiences.                                                                                                                                                                            |
| <b><i>Aboriginal experiences are limited and there is a strong desire for culturally appropriate, Traditional Owner-led opportunities.</i></b> | Commitment to developing Aboriginal cultural experiences through a Traditional Owner-led process that aligns with the forthcoming Reconciliation Action Plan.<br><br>This includes governance pathways for cultural authority, cultural IP, data sovereignty, and community monitoring, ensuring all First Nations-related initiatives are paced and sequenced appropriately. |
| <b><i>Operators need help with product development and distribution; visitors struggle to find/book tours.</i></b>                             | Industry mentoring clusters; enable online bookability; consider VIC-led 'owned' experiences as pilots; connect Visit Kiama to key distributors.                                                                                                                                                                                                                              |
| <b><i>Accommodation mix limits higher-yield segments and mid-week stays; interest in investment exists.</i></b>                                | Accommodation planning and prospectus (incl. Blowhole Point opportunity and eco-retreats on suitable rural land); policy settings to encourage quality and sustainable development.                                                                                                                                                                                           |

#### 1.4.7 Policy Alignment and Evidence

The Strategy aligns with and operationalises priorities in:

- NSW Visitor Economy Strategy 2035. Applies a whole-of-government lens, streamlined planning, sustainable growth and experience investment.
- DSSS Destination Management Plan. Prioritises hero experiences, soft adventure, culture and culinary/agritourism pillars, as well as trade-ready product development.
- Kiama REDS 2023. With a focus on town centre revitalisation, approvals reform, Harbour revitalisation, and enabling infrastructure.
- NSW 24-Hour Economy Strategy. Supports balanced, safe and vibrant night-time activation suited to local context.
- Access & Aviation – capitalising on Western Sydney International (WSI) Airport opening (late 2026) and Sydney access to attract higher-yield segments via the Grand Pacific Drive.

#### Alignment with Closing the Gap and Kiama's Reconciliation Commitments

- This Strategy aligns with elements of the National Closing the Gap Agreement, especially: Priority 8 – Strong economic participation and development of people and their communities, reflected in commitments to Traditional Owner-led cultural tourism and Aboriginal enterprise development.
- Priority 15 – People maintain a distinctive cultural, spiritual, physical and economic relationship with their land and waters, echoed in experience development that respects and elevates Dharawal cultural knowledge, stories, sites and custodianship.

#### Alignment with the forthcoming Reconciliation Action Plan

- The VES will embed actions within the RAP's governance structures, ensuring cultural tourism and

Aboriginal visitor-ready products evolve with strong cultural authority, community monitoring, and the Traditional Custodians' guidance.

- Where RAP governance structures are still being established, no Aboriginal visitor-ready product will proceed beyond feasibility or concept stage without appropriate cultural authority and guidance.
- Actions and initiatives relating to First Nations tourism will therefore be explored through yearly VES reviews and RAP-led consultation, allowing for culturally appropriate sequencing and Traditional Owner decision-making.

#### **1.4.8 Engagement Quality and Limitations**

##### **Quality & Inclusivity**

Engagement for this Strategy incorporated a range of perspectives, including residents, businesses, industry representatives, the Tourism and Economic Advisory Committee (TEAC), partner agencies and Traditional Owners. Community survey responses provided clear directional insights and were complemented by qualitative interviews, field assessment and on-site audits.

##### **Limitations**

While engagement informed a strong evidence base, some limitations are acknowledged. The community survey sample size (104 responses) limits statistical inference, and some cohorts (including younger age groups and specific industry subsectors) were under-represented. Engagement with Traditional Owners is ongoing and will continue in line with appropriate cultural protocols, governance arrangements and community-led timeframes, which will shape the scope, sequencing and delivery of First Nations visitor experiences over time. In addition, some initiatives identified in this Strategy will require further feasibility assessment, heritage considerations and planning approvals before progression.

## 1.5 Vision Statement

By 2035, Kiama will inspire visitors with authentic coastal experiences that connect them to nature, heritage and community. It will be a sustainable, culturally rich and community-supported destination where visitors stay longer, do more and contribute to a thriving local economy, vibrant culture and the protection of Kiama's unique environment.

## 1.6 Approach

A core principle of this Strategy is that tourism must enhance, not compromise, local lifestyle and values. Residents are partners in shaping experiences and benefit from improved infrastructure, cultural opportunities, and economic activity. This is referred to as a Community-Centric Approach.

### Guiding Principles

- Sustainability First – Protect the natural and cultural assets on which tourism depends.
- Authenticity and Storytelling – Celebrate what makes Kiama distinctive.
- Collaboration and Partnership – Work across sectors and with higher levels of government.
- Quality over Quantity – Prioritise meaningful experiences, not just higher numbers.
- Data-Led Decision Making – Ensure all actions are informed by robust insights and evidence.

## 1.7 Defining the Visitor Economy

For this Strategy, terms are defined as:

- A **visitor** is anyone who travels outside their usual place of residence to Kiama for leisure, business, or events.
- The **visitor economy** encompasses all economic activity directly or indirectly generated by these visitors, including accommodation, food, attractions, retail, transport, events, and supporting services.
- The **tourism sector** refers to core businesses whose primary customers are visitors including accommodation, attractions, events, food and beverage, retail, arts and culture, outdoor recreation and transport and tour operators.
- The **events sector** includes festivals, performances, conferences, and markets that may attract both visitors and locals.
- **Tourism assets**, include natural (coast, escarpments, biodiversity), cultural assets (heritage buildings, arts), Aboriginal heritage, built infrastructure.



## PART 2: Situational Analysis

This situational analysis provides an evidence-based overview of Kiama's visitor economy and the governance framework that supports its development. While the region's appeal is anchored in its natural beauty, vibrant communities and diverse experiences, effective management is essential to balance growth with community wellbeing and environmental sustainability. Effective destination management and governance are therefore critical to balancing opportunities and pressures.

### Governance

Council plays a central role in this process. The Manager, Tourism and Economic Development works closely with the Tourism and Economic Advisory Committee (TEAC), a committee of Council that acts in an advisory capacity on strategies outlined in Pillar 3 of the Kiama Community Strategic Plan and serves as the primary conduit between the community and Council on economic development and tourism matters.

### 2.1 Market Analysis - Domestic and International Visitor Statistics

Tourism is a cornerstone of Kiama area's economy. It is the region's second highest industry sector for employment, directly supporting over 900 jobs<sup>1</sup> across the Municipality, equating to 13.5% of total employment.

#### Headline results – Year ending March 2025<sup>2</sup>



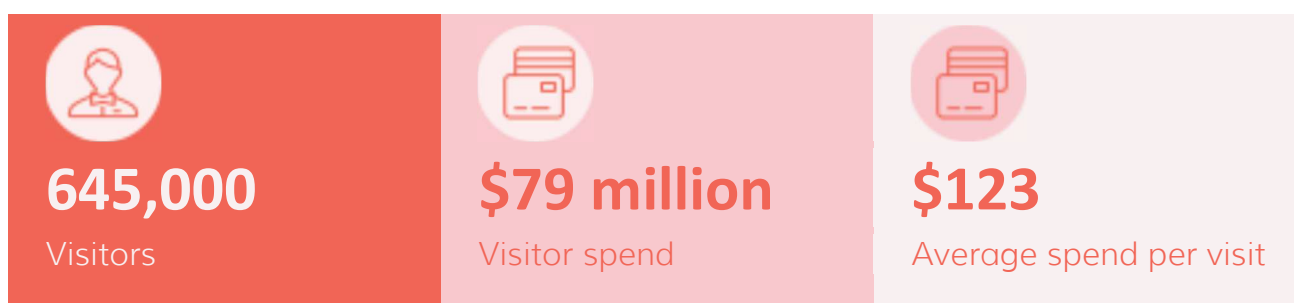
### Sectoral impact

Accommodation and Food Services categories are the largest beneficiaries of visitor expenditure. It is estimated that this sector captures \$0.635 for every visitor dollar spent in Kiama.

### Domestic market

Domestic visitors are the lifeblood of Kiama's visitor economy. Day-trippers account for the largest share of volume; however, their average daily spend and overall contribution are lower than overnight visitors – presenting both a challenge and an opportunity to lift day-trip yield or convert them to overnight visitors.

#### Domestic day-trip



<sup>1</sup> <https://app.remplan.com.au/kiama/economy/tourism/employment>

<sup>2</sup> Kiama LGA Tourism Monitor March 2025 – Tourism Strategy Development Services

## Domestic overnight



## International market

International visitors comprise <2% of total visitation. Volumes show moderate growth compared to pre-pandemic levels.



## 2.2 Key Tourism Trends Likely to Influence Kiama's Future



### Wellness Tourism & Nature-Based Travel

Australia is seeing a strong rise in wellness tourism with more visitors seeking travel that supports both mental and physical wellbeing. Recent research from the Global Wellness Institute (2025) shows "strong demand for wellness experiences and travel, with more than half the adult population planning a wellness break in the next 12 months, and surging interest in trends like wild swimming, bathhouses and ice plunges". This aligns with a broader shift toward integrated wellness, where travellers look for nature, rest, movement and rejuvenation woven throughout the entire trip<sup>3</sup>.



### Sustainable, Regenerative, and Responsible Travel

Travellers are increasingly environmentally conscious, wanting to travel in ways that are regenerative or low-impact. This includes "regen-routes" travel that gives back to nature or supports conservation<sup>4</sup>. Coastal destinations (like Kiama and surrounding villages) may be particularly affected: preserving coastline, managing erosion, and protecting natural values will be more important as visitors care more about sustainability. Also, global momentum for sustainable coastal tourism ("blue tourism") is growing, with international initiatives to protect marine ecosystems.

<sup>3</sup> <https://www.australiantraveller.com/australia/aussie-travel-trends-2026> & [www.accomnews.com.au](https://www.accomnews.com.au)  
<https://travelbulletin.com.au/newsroom/resilience-and-purpose-how-aussies-view-travel-in-2025><sup>4</sup>



### Off-Peak / Shoulder-Season Travel ("Coolcations")

There's a trend toward avoiding peak-season crowds. Some travellers are choosing off-peak travel, or "cool-cations" taking breaks in less crowded times or cooler regions. This could benefit Kiama if it promotes experiences in non-summer months (walks, wellness, nature) and markets shoulder-season stays. Also, travellers are looking for meaningful, local connections to local food, local stories, place-based experiences rather than just "tick the box" tourism.



### Technology & Personalisation

Technology is rapidly reshaping travel expectations. AI-driven tools are enabling "customised trip itineraries" and improving "personalisation, convenience, and sustainability in traveller experiences". Source: worldhistoryjournal.com  
Sustainable travel planning is also being enhanced by digital tools, with AI platforms helping travellers reduce their environmental footprint.

## 2.3 Strengths

Kiama's proximity and accessibility is a major strength. The region is just 90 minutes from Sydney, Australia's largest visitor source market, via road or two hours by direct train, and approximately 2.75 hours' drive from Canberra, opening access to two significant domestic markets.

Kiama's offering is diverse, spanning natural landscapes, cultural experiences, events and recreational assets at varying stages of maturity.



**Natural assets** include:

**Coastal icons** - Kiama Blowhole, Little Blowhole, Bombo Headland Quarry, Cathedral Rocks.

**Beaches and Surf** - Seven Mile Beach, Werri Beach, Jones Beach, Kendalls Beach – strong surf culture and family appeal.

**Rainforests and Escarpment** - Minnamurra Rainforest and waterfalls, Budderoo National Park, Saddleback Mountain lookout.

**Walking & Cycling** - Kiama Coast Walk (22km), shared paths, mountain biking trails in surrounding areas.

**Marine Environments** - Formed ocean pools and natural rock pools, rivers, snorkelling, surfing, SUP, whale-watching vantage points.

**Agritourism and hinterland** - Jamberoo Valley, farm experiences, local produce and outlets such as The Kiama Farmers' Market.

Imagery of coastal icons create strong destination recognition and opportunities to grow 'hero' anchor experiences that provide inspiration for bookable experience development. *Developing iconic experiences is one of the principal recommendations of the NSW Visitor Economy Strategy 2035.*



## **Cultural and Heritage experiences and attractions include:**

### **Local First Nations Cultural and Heritage experiences, attractions and touch points include:**

Dharawal Country, home of the Wodi Wodi people, with significant cultural landscapes and stories reflected in:

- Dreaming Poles located on the northern section of the Kiama Coast Walk, reflecting local cultural significance.
- Artwork, murals, and exhibitions created by local Elders and Traditional Owners that share their cultural stories and knowledge.
- Immersive Welcome to Country ceremonies and Smoking Ceremonies led by local Traditional Owners.
- Events that commemorate and celebrate First Nations culture, history, and continuing connection to Country.
- Interpretive signage that acknowledges Country and highlights culturally significant sites.

### **European heritage**

- Kiama Lighthouse (1887)
- Pilots Cottage (1881)
- Historic Terrace Houses, Collins Street (1870-1880s)
- Quarrying and basalt industry heritage
- Dry Stone Walls
- Heritage buildings in the township (Kiama Post Office, former bank buildings, Presbyterian and Anglican churches)

### **Arts and creative industries**

- Local galleries showcasing regional artists and rotating exhibitions.
- Public art and street murals across Kiama's town centre and coastal precincts.
- Artist-led creative workshops, including pottery, painting, ceramics and mixed media.
- Digital and interpretive arts experiences such as Kiama Library's My Place digital tour and Lloyd Rees heritage trail.
- Online 'cultural treasure map' via South Coast Arts, [Creative South](#)

### **Festivals and events**

- A well-established events culture that positions Kiama as a destination with "always something on."
- A diverse annual calendar including arts, music, cultural, sporting, seasonal and community festivals.
- Events that support shoulder-season visitation, mid-week stays, and the development of bookable packages (e.g., stay + event + dining).
- Opportunities to integrate creative industries (art markets, performances, live music, workshops) into existing or emerging signature events.



### Major attractions for families include:

**Jamberoo Action Park**, a large water theme park with wave pool, as well as dry land activities such as bobsled, set in a natural green valley landscape.

**Illawarra Fly Treetop Adventure** offers a treetop walk through the rainforest canopy, with options for ziplining and an active school holiday program.

**Minnamurra Rainforest**, best known for its lush subtropical canopy, elevated boardwalks, and the spectacular Minnamurra Falls.



### Emerging tourism sectors include:

**Agritourism** - Wineries, cideries, craft breweries, farmgate workshops, cooking school experiences, and bespoke accommodation.

**Wellness** - yoga retreats, spa and health getaways.

**Adventure** - kayaking, canyoning, rock climbing, bouldering.

## 2.4 Weakness

The visitor economy remains seasonal and exposed to external shocks (e.g., severe weather, fuel prices, global travel trends). The COVID-19 period (2020–2022) accelerated demand for accessible, authentic nature-based and wellness experiences; areas of strength for Kiama – but also created and highlighted pressure points:

- Overcrowding and strain on local infrastructure (parking, amenities, waste, and natural attractions such as Blowhole Point).
- Seasonal imbalances: peak-period pressure and off-peak trading challenges, meaning accommodation and workforce shortages in peak time.
- Resident dissatisfaction where visitation is not managed sustainably and overcrowding impacts amenity.

There is a growing need to balance visitor growth with community wellbeing, improve visitor dispersal, and ensure tourism delivers clear benefits for residents, fostering community advocacy and support rather than visitor-resident tension. This Strategy sets a framework for collaborative governance, improved data collection and ongoing performance evaluation so tourism serves the broader public interest.

Kiama's natural assets (coastline, escarpment, waterways and rural hinterland) are also its most fragile. Climate pressures (coastal erosion, severe weather, biodiversity loss) require strengthened sustainable destination management, alignment with Council sustainability plans, and investment in resilient infrastructure and green tourism initiatives to embed environmental sustainability as part of Kiama's brand.

Finally, limited diversification in bookable experiences remains a weakness. Recognised gaps in agritourism, cultural tourism (including Aboriginal experiences) and conferencing reduce length of stay and year-round stability, reinforcing perceptions of limited destination depth.

## 2.5 Opportunities

### Seasonality as a Platform for Growth

Kiama's seasonal patterns create distinct opportunities: summer attracts families and beachgoers; autumn and spring support weddings, festivals and events; winter offers quieter coastal escapes complemented by dining, workshops and hinterland retreats. The Strategy leverages these dynamics to extend stays, diversify experiences and attract higher-yield segments year-round.

### Emerging Opportunities and Challenges

There is strong potential to expand boutique accommodation and broaden experiences in wellness, agritourism, marine and Aboriginal tourism, while activating the night-time economy to enhance vibrancy and liveability. Proactive management is also required to address peak-season pressures (congestion, parking, environmental strain), short-term accommodation tensions and workforce constraints, as well as off-peak gaps in product and operating hours. This Strategy sets a balanced approach so Kiama remains a destination of choice while protecting local character and community values.

### Operator Capability and Digital Transformation

High-yield target markets identified in the Destination Kiama Marketing Plan (such as 'Smart Money' empty nesters and 'Self-made Lifestylers') expect quality accommodation, accessible transport, inclusive tourism options and seamless digital tools for booking and navigation. However, digital capability and trade distribution remain gaps among local operators. Destination marketing is outpacing the sector's ability to modernise, creating urgency for digital transformation and product innovation.

#### Experience Development Focus Areas



#### Night-Time Economy

Evening activity is limited outside peak dining hours, creating a gap for overnight visitors and locals seeking cultural engagement after dark. Development of a Night-Time Economy Strategy, aligned with NSW Government Vibrancy Reforms, could prioritise:

- **Precinct Activation:** Special Entertainment Precincts and coordinated late-night programming in Kiama CBD, and possibly Gerringong, supported by lighting, wayfinding and safety measures.
- **Cultural Programming:** Partnerships with regional organisations and local creatives to deliver small-scale performances, art trails and pop-up experiences complementing existing events.
- **Noise Management:** Implement noise attenuation measures to protect residential amenity.



#### Marine Tourism

Despite Kiama's spectacular coastline, marine reserves and whale migration routes, marine tourism remains underdeveloped. Opportunities include:

- **Product Development:** Address licensing barriers and support new offerings in partnership with Destination Sydney Surrounds South, such as guided kayaking, snorkelling, diving and eco-cruises showcasing marine biodiversity.
- **Collaborate with operators, marine scientists and conservation groups** to create authentic, educational experiences aligned with sustainability principles.
- **Advocate for improved boat ramps, signage and safe access points** as part of the Kiama Harbour Revitalisation Project.
- **Build marketing content** highlighting marine environments, seasonal wildlife and conservation credentials to attract eco-tourists and adventure travellers.



### **Aboriginal Visitor-Ready Product**

The development of Aboriginal visitor-ready experiences in Kiama must be guided by Traditional Owners and aligned with Council's forthcoming Innovate Reconciliation Action Plan (2026–2027) and the KMC Indigenous Principles & Engagement Guide.

- Experience development aligns with the National Agreement on Closing the Gap (2020) Priority 8 by supporting pathways for Aboriginal economic participation. As well as Priority 15 - by acknowledging and respecting the Wodi Wodi people's cultural authority and ongoing custodianship of Dharawal Country.
- Specific projects, such as interpretive content, cultural storytelling, guided experiences, and place naming will be explored progressively through the RAP, where cultural authority and community-led monitoring can appropriately guide development.

## **2.6 Threats**

Kiama's visitor economy is supported by strong natural assets, attractive towns and proximity to major markets. At the same time, several challenges need to be managed to protect what makes Kiama special and to ensure tourism continues to benefit the community.

### **Competition from comparable destinations**

Kiama operates in a competitive coastal tourism market, particularly against destinations such as the Central Coast and Eurobodalla Coast that target similar short-break and nature-based markets. Collaboration with neighbouring councils and tourism partners through Destination Sydney Surrounds South (DSSS) provides an important way to respond to this competition. Initiatives such as the Grand Pacific Drive support joint promotion and touring itineraries, encouraging visitors to travel further south and stay longer.

There are also opportunities to strengthen Kiama's role within broader regional experiences. Cycling is a key example, where alignment with established products in neighbouring regions can attract high-value visitors while supporting local accommodation, hospitality and town-based experiences. At the same time, Kiama must continue to differentiate itself through its coastal village character, walkable town centre, iconic blowholes and strong connection to nature, to remain a destination where visitors choose to stay rather than pass through.

### **Capacity pressures and infrastructure limits**

Kiama's popularity places pressure on roads, parking, public amenities, beaches and open spaces, particularly during peak periods. If not well managed, congestion and crowding can detract from the visitor experience and impact resident amenity, limiting the destination's ability to grow sustainably.

### **Accommodation mix and seasonality**

The accommodation offer is dominated by short-stay and holiday rental options, with limited diversity to support longer stays or different visitor markets. Strong seasonality creates peak demand pressures while challenging business viability and employment during quieter periods.

### **Environmental and climate resilience**

Kiama's natural assets are central to its appeal but are increasingly affected by coastal erosion, extreme weather events and pressure on sensitive environments. Managing visitation while protecting landscapes, visitor safety and experience will remain an ongoing challenge.

### **Transport access and connectivity**

While Kiama is well connected by road and rail, the visitor economy remains heavily reliant on private vehicles. Limited public transport between towns, beaches, tourist attractions and hinterland areas contributes to congestion and restricts visitor movement and dispersal across the LGA.

### **Workforce availability**

Visitor economy businesses continue to face workforce shortages, driven by housing affordability, limited rentals and competition from larger centres. These pressures affect service levels, trading hours and the overall visitor experience.

### **Changing visitor expectations**

Visitor expectations are continuing to evolve, with increased demand for high-quality experiences, sustainability, accessibility and digital information. Adapting to these expectations will be essential to maintaining Kiama's competitiveness and appeal over time.



## PART 3: Vision, Goals & Guiding Principles

A tourism vision for Kiama's visitor economy balances the twin imperatives of growth and sustainability. It rejects growth for growth's sake, instead embracing quality, authenticity, and inclusivity.

### 3.1 Guiding Principles

This Strategy's Vision is grounded in guiding principles that reflect community values and best practice in sustainable destination management. These principles provide a decision-making framework to ensure short-term actions align with long-term tourism outcomes.

#### **Sustainability First**

*Sustainability is holistic, and includes environmental care, social wellbeing, and economic resilience. It means protecting and regenerating natural and cultural assets, prioritising low-impact tourism, and safeguarding liveability so tourism delivers lasting benefits for both our place and our community.*

#### **Authenticity and Storytelling**

*Celebrate what makes Kiama distinctive through genuine, place-based storytelling. Where Aboriginal cultural knowledge is shared, storytelling will be guided by the appropriate knowledge-holders to ensure cultural integrity, respect and authenticity.*

#### **Collaboration and Partnership**

*Strengthen regional connections and leverage opportunities by working collaboratively across Council, industry, regional bodies, and community. Partnerships enable shared resources, funding, and marketing initiatives that amplify the NSW south coast's profile and deliver collective benefits.*

#### **Quality over Quantity**

*Focus on value and visitor experience rather than volume. By upskilling operators and prioritising high-yield markets, Kiama can deliver exceptional experiences that encourage longer stays, repeat visitation and enhance its reputation as a premium destination.*

## 3.2 Vision Statement

*By 2035, Kiama will inspire visitors with authentic coastal experiences that connect them to nature, heritage and community. It will be a sustainable, culturally rich and community-supported destination where visitors stay longer, do more and contribute to a thriving local economy, vibrant culture and protected environment.*



### 3.3 Strategic Goals and Key Initiatives

This Strategy's guiding principles (3.1) and vision (3.2) set the foundation for five Strategic Goals that respond to current challenges and opportunities. Each goal is supported by key initiatives that will guide investment, marketing, infrastructure, and experience development over the next decade.

| 1. Grow High-Value Visitation                                                                                                                                                  |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                  |
|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Objective                                                                                                                                                                      | Initiatives                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                      |
| <i>Attract visitors who stay longer and spend more, with a focus on increasing overnight stays during quieter seasons to reduce reliance on day trippers and summer peaks.</i> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Advocate for more premium and boutique accommodation options to appeal to high-spending visitors.</li> <li>• Expand high-quality, bookable experiences that showcase Kiama's coastal character and natural beauty.</li> <li>• Develop targeted marketing campaigns that promote premium accommodation, dining, and wellness experiences.</li> <li>• Encourage quality standards through awards and accreditation programs.</li> </ul>                                                                                                                                                                                                   |
| 2. Diversify Experiences and Markets                                                                                                                                           |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                  |
| Objective                                                                                                                                                                      | Initiatives                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                      |
| <i>Position Kiama as more than "sun, sea, surf" by promoting wellness, agritourism, cultural experiences and marine activities.</i>                                            | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Encourage dispersal across the municipality to reduce pressure on popular sites, develop new experience hotspots and spread economic benefits.</li> <li>• Target growth markets including international visitors, eco-conscious travellers, and younger audiences seeking authentic experiences.</li> <li>• Support Aboriginal tourism development pathways (with cultural authority), accessible &amp; inclusive tourism and MICE/small conferencing to stabilise off-peak.</li> <li>• Promote Kiama as a short-break destination for Western Sydney residents and the international market (ahead of WSI Airport opening).</li> </ul> |
| 3. Enhance Infrastructure and Accessibility                                                                                                                                    |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                  |
| Objective                                                                                                                                                                      | Initiatives                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                      |
| <i>Improve transport connections, visitor information, signage, and access to key attractions.</i>                                                                             | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Advocate for improved transport links across the region, including road, rail, and public transport improvements via the Illawarra Shoalhaven Strategic Regional Integrated Transport Plan (2026).</li> <li>• Review existing signage and develop a comprehensive signage and wayfinding plan for the whole municipality.</li> <li>• Ensure tourism-related investment enhances public spaces and amenities, creating attractive and functional precincts for both residents and visitors.</li> </ul>                                                                                                                                   |

|                                                                                                         |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                  |
|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
|                                                                                                         | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Incorporate clear wayfinding and digital navigation tools into visitor communications.</li> <li>• Work with relevant agencies to improve access to tourism experiences and services for all visitors, including those with mobility needs.</li> </ul>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                   |
| <b>4. Build Industry Capability and Workforce</b>                                                       |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                  |
| <b>Objective</b>                                                                                        | <b>Initiatives</b>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                               |
| <b>Support local businesses to improve service delivery and strengthen the tourism workforce.</b>       | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Invest in training programs that help businesses adopt digital tools and sustainable practices.</li> <li>• Promote the use of online platforms for marketing, booking, and visitor servicing.</li> <li>• Advocate for housing solutions that support a stable tourism workforce and encourage long-term employment in the sector.</li> </ul>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                            |
| <b>5. Activate the Night-Time and Cultural Economy</b>                                                  |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                  |
| <b>Objective</b>                                                                                        | <b>Initiatives</b>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                               |
| <b>Position Kiama as a vibrant coastal destination with a thriving night-time and cultural economy.</b> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Enrich visitor and resident experiences by supporting evening activities, live performance, dining and events; curate precinct activation in the Harbour and town centre.</li> <li>• Develop the Night-Time Economy Strategy and progress the Special Entertainment Precinct trial to concentrate nightlife where residential impacts are manageable.</li> <li>• Improve lighting, safety and transport arrangements that support movement after dark; balance activation with amenity through noise and place management.</li> <li>• Integrate night-time itineraries and cultural storytelling into destination campaigns.</li> </ul> |

### 3.4 Enablers

Applied across all Strategic Goals, the following enablers ensure the Strategy has a foundation of community priorities and evidence-based decision making.

#### **Community Engagement and Shared Value**

Ongoing engagement on precinct planning, events and sustainability; co-design all-ages cultural and live-music programming; education for residents and visitors to protect environments and respect local character.

This can be measured by community satisfaction, participation, business sentiment, environmental stewardship indicators.

#### **Data Insights and Innovation**

Strengthen evidence-based decisions through shared data and smart-destination tools (voluntary accommodation stats for occupancy and length of stay; participation in benchmarking programs; precinct footfall and parking telemetry).



## PART 4: Focus Areas

These focus areas directly support one of more Strategic Goals (Section 3.3), guiding experience development, investment, local policy considerations, and collaborative initiatives. Each area is interconnected, recognising that destination success depends on an integrated approach where marketing, infrastructure, experiences, and community are aligned.

### 4.1 Destination Brand and Marketing

#### Supporting Goals

- 1** *Grow High-Value Visitation*
- 2** *Diversify Experiences & Markets*
- 3** *Activate the Night-Time Cultural Economy*

The Destination Kiama brand and brand promise require continual renewal to remain relevant, distinctive and competitive. Brand and marketing activity will increasingly focus on priority visitor segments and higher-value markets, using data-led insights to guide storytelling, campaign targeting and conversion across seasons.

CASE STUDY: Tasman Drive in Gerringong has gained significant attention on social media for its scenic views overlooking Werri Beach, framed by rolling green hills. While this trend has presented challenges for residents, it demonstrates the potential of a clear, singular narrative supported by compelling imagery.

Refining Kiama's brand positioning through continuous investment in place branding and storytelling for all towns villages, across digital platforms and visitor touchpoints, can support community pride and a shared vision for Kiama's tourism future. A more sophisticated brand and creative representation (including the Destination Kiama logo and website) will better convert visitors and lift experience development to meet travel demand.

Recognition as NSW's Top Tourism Town in consecutive years indicates destination marketing is working well. The printed visitor guide is informative, on-brand and inspiring. Social media management includes regular posting and engagement monitoring, with quality content, consistent tone and destination themes in content planning.

#### Marketing approach

"Win in Winter – Defend in Summer"

Kiama's visitor economy is highly seasonal, with summer as the peak period. This approach focuses on reducing that imbalance by promoting Kiama as an attractive winter short-break destination. The goal is to encourage visitors who stay longer and spend more during quieter months, while maintaining strong summer performance. Regional opportunities like the Grand Pacific Drive will continue to be leveraged to support this strategy. Marketing activity will be informed by visitation and spend data to refine audience targeting, optimise campaign timing, and support shoulder-season growth.

| <b>Priority focus for destination marketing includes:</b>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                   | <b>Expected outcomes (as provided):</b>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                            |
|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Dramatic coastline and volcanic formations</li> <li>• History, stories, culture</li> <li>• Local producer experiences</li> <li>• Joint marketing with industry partners</li> <li>• Shared itineraries including the Grand Pacific Drive</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Stronger recognition of Kiama as more than a day-trip destination</li> <li>• Greater awareness of cultural, creative and hinterland experiences</li> <li>• Improved off-peak and overnight visitor conversion, particularly among higher-value market segments</li> </ul> |

## 4.2 Experience and Product Development

| <b>Supporting Goals:</b> |                                                 |
|--------------------------|-------------------------------------------------|
| <b>1</b>                 | <b>Grow High-Value Visitation</b>               |
| <b>2</b>                 | <b>Diversify Experiences &amp; Markets</b>      |
| <b>3</b>                 | <b>Activate the Night-Time Cultural Economy</b> |

Although Kiama’s natural assets are distinctive, visitor engagement is limited by gaps in interpretation, amenities, accessibility, and bookable experiences. Addressing these gaps through precinct upgrades, cultural storytelling, and new product development will strengthen Kiama’s appeal and increase overnight stays.

Experience and product development will be advanced through a place-based approach, focusing on precincts and assets with the capacity to deliver distinctive, bookable experiences and stronger connections between town centres, attractions and the coast. The following sections outline priority locations and experience opportunities across the Kiama area.

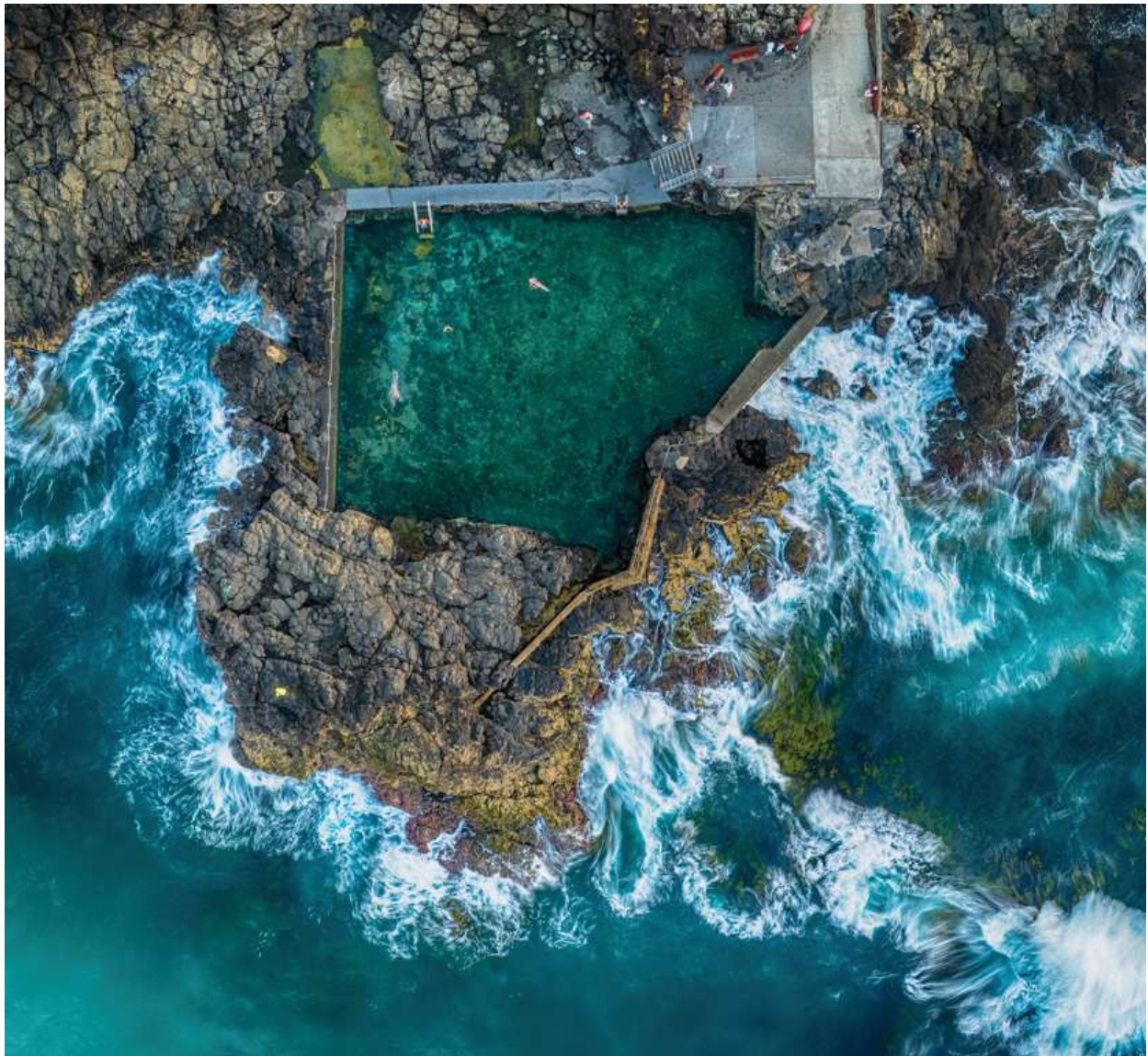


#### **4.2.1 Kiama Harbour Revitalisation**

Delivering on the community's vision for an activated Kiama Harbour is a priority for Council. Limitations are acknowledged due to shared ownership between Transport, Crown Land and Marime.

Connecting Manning Street to the Harbour through boardwalks featuring interpretive signage, wayfinding, lighting, and public art will create a vibrant link and increase foot traffic. This activation would support marine tourism operators and improve viability for a signature seafood venue within an entertainment zone, contributing to Kiama's night-time economy.

To progress the Kiama Harbour Revitalisation Project and Action Plan (2021), Council will advocate for its inclusion in relevant State agency plans and priorities, and seek ministerial support to enable inter-agency collaboration and resourcing for delivery.



#### **4.2.2 Blowhole Point – Reserve 87397**

A visitor-led approach that supports the broader community should guide experience development at Blowhole Point. An all-weather viewing structure would enhance the visitor experience and enable year-round wellness activities (e.g., yoga, meditation). Night-time illumination of the Blowhole could further activate the precinct and contribute to Kiama's night-time economy.

Pilots Cottage (heritage-listed): Investigate permitted uses, with potential for sensitive repurposing as a dining venue or another active visitor experience.

Comprehensive precinct upgrade plan: Prepare an integrated plan that complements the Kiama Harbour Revitalisation Project and includes:

- Visitor servicing with clear wayfinding and amenities.
- Retail space that includes authentic storytelling – geological (formation, basalt heritage) and cultural (Aboriginal and local histories), through interpretation and curated content.
- Coordinated design elements to improve access, amenity, and place identity.

Council can advocate for State support to progress concept planning, including exploration of a high-quality accommodation opportunity to replace the existing Kiama Harbour Cabins, subject to Crown Land tenure, community values, and alignment with the precinct upgrade plan.



#### 4.2.3 Bombo Headland – Adventure and Geotourism

Bombo Headland’s distinct geological formations present a unique opportunity to create a stronger visitor experience. Concepts such as geotourism, geocaching, rock climbing, and bouldering could diversify Kiama’s nature-based offering and leverage the site’s dramatic landform as a point of difference.

As Council is not the landowner, any proposal would require owners’ consent from Sydney Water and the Department of Planning and Housing. A feasibility study would be essential to assess environmental, safety, and market considerations, and the project would need to be identified as a priority by the State to progress. This type of experience aligns with the NSW Visitor Economy Strategy 2035, which supports development of distinctive, nature-based and adventure tourism products.



#### 4.2.4 Kiama Coast Walk

Activating the Kiama Coast Walk (KCW) presents a major opportunity to elevate Kiama’s soft-adventure offering and transform the walk into a State-significant, multi-day experience. The vision is to create an end-to-end product that attracts walking-holiday operators, increases overnight stays, and boosts visitor spend.

To achieve this, Council can explore development of an Active Transport Strategy for the municipality, positioning the KCW as a flagship corridor. This would improve walk/cycle connectivity, reduce vehicle reliance, and strengthen links to town centres, rail stations, and bus stops to enhance both visitor mobility and local amenity. For the KCW, priority actions could include:

- Amenity upgrades: Refresh interpretive and wayfinding signage, install all-weather shelters, and incorporate First Nations art and storytelling along the route.
- Southern extension: Resolve land-use permits for the proposed extension to Gerroa, enabling tour operators to package the walk as a signature product.

Partnerships will be essential. Council will work with DSSS and DNSW to position the KCW as a “must-do” NSW Signature Walk, aligning with State priorities for anchor experiences. This activation will enhance Kiama’s appeal and support dispersal and seasonality management across the region.



#### 4.2.5 Events as Drivers of Visitation

Events provide an opportunity to spike visitation and generate positive economic and social impact. Leisure events should reflect Kiama's lifestyle, heritage, and cultural values, offering visitors an authentic snapshot of the destination that inspires return visits. However, the Kiama Major Events Impact Review Report (2024) highlights that peak-period events can strain infrastructure and negatively impact the community.

The greatest opportunity lies in developing events that extend visitation beyond peak periods, fill accommodation gaps, and deliver steady, year-round benefits for local businesses. This includes:

- Mid-week conferences and business events to drive visitation during shoulder periods.
- Itinerary development and packaging around events to encourage extended stays and dispersal across the region.
- Targeted grant support for events scheduled outside peak times, ensuring alignment with seasonality management and community wellbeing.
- Strategic event attraction focused on events that complement the destination's identity and strengthen the economy.

This approach ensures events contribute positively to both the visitor experience and Kiama's broader economic goals, while adding the highest value to the community.



#### 4.2.6 Food Tourism

Food tourism in Kiama should focus on authentic “taste of place” experiences – farm tours, markets, cooking classes, and festivals that connect visitors to the region’s heritage. While agritourism faces challenges under State planning policies, reframing the narrative toward food tourism enables producers to explore farmgate sales, culinary workshops, and cooking schools.

Council can also support development of a regional food and wine touring experience across neighbouring council areas, working in partnership with Destination Sydney Surrounds South to position Kiama as a key contributor to the South Coast’s culinary tourism offering. This approach leverages collaboration to create bookable itineraries, encourage dispersal, and strengthen Kiama’s appeal to high-value visitors seeking authentic, local food experiences.

### 4.3 Infrastructure, Access and Sustainability

#### Supporting Goals:

- 1 Enhance Infrastructure and Accessibility
- 2 Grow High-Value Visitation

#### 4.3.1 Accommodation

Current accommodation in the Kiama LGA is heavily concentrated in Kiama township, with short-term rental platforms alone listing over 900 properties in the municipality. While this supply is generally adequate, major events suffer and attracting high-yield visitors will require new four and five star developments the Destination NSW’s VES 2035 highlights the need for evidence-based planning and investment facilitation, aligning with their objective to unlock new rooms where appropriate and sustainable.

Council can begin by investigating market demand to determine the most suitable accommodation types by location, including:

- Blowhole Point: Explore the feasibility of high-quality, thoughtfully designed accommodation, ensuring sensitivity to Crown Land tenure, community values, and the precinct upgrade plan.
- Outer villages: Assess potential for eco-style boutique retreats in areas such as Gerroa, Gerringong, and Kiama Downs to diversify the accommodation mix and deliver social benefits, while navigating relevant land-use regulations.

To support this, Council should:

- Conduct an accommodation audit to map current capacity, types, and geographical distribution, and assess the impact of short-term holiday rentals on housing availability.
- Undertake a market feasibility study for target accommodation models to analyse demand and yield, informing decisions on optimal accommodation types.
- Use findings to guide future land-use planning, precinct development, investment attraction, and advocacy.

This evidence-based approach will ensure accommodation development aligns with Kiama's strategic goals to grow high-value visitation, spread demand beyond the township, and support sustainable community outcomes.

#### **4.3.2 Access**

The opening of Western Sydney International Airport (WSI) (forecast for late 2026 and approximately 90 minutes' drive from Kiama), presents a major opportunity for the region. Passenger numbers are forecast to reach 10 million by 2033, significantly increasing international visitation. This growth enables Kiama to expand its international source mix, currently only 8% of overnight visitors.

Regardless of whether visitors arrive via WSI or Sydney Kingsford Smith Airport (similar drive time), Council will work with local operators and regional partners to ensure high-quality, bookable experiences are visible in international channels. Collaboration with Destination NSW and Destination Sydney Surrounds South will be essential to leverage marketing and position Kiama as a key stop on the Grand Pacific Drive, one of NSW's iconic touring routes spanning Royal National Park through Wollongong, Shellharbour, Kiama, and into Shoalhaven.

To convert aviation growth into tangible visitation:

- International trade enablement: Package bookable experiences across the region that align with aviation schedules and touring flows (e.g., Grand Pacific Drive), and distribute via trade partners.
- Route opportunity tracking: Monitor WSI route announcements and leverage Destination NSW campaigns and the WSI/NSW Take Off Fund to pitch Kiama-aligned itineraries to airlines and wholesalers.
- Rail-linked itineraries: Promote rail-friendly itineraries (Kiama/Bombo/Gerringong) to encourage sustainable travel options.

Kiama, Bombo, and Gerringong are serviced by rail from Sydney, with local buses connecting outer villages. However, gaps in local transport, particularly taxis and rideshare availability on weekends and evenings, impact both tourism and community liveability, with broader social implications beyond visitor servicing.

An investigation by Council, in partnership with Kiama Business Network, into latent demand is recommended to:

- Quantify unmet transport needs for visitors and residents, creating a data-driven case for action.
- Enable collaboration with current licence holders to improve service availability and reliability.
- Support advocacy to Transport for NSW / Point to Point Commissioner for additional licences or flexible conditions where evidence supports it.
- Explore complementary or other models (e.g., rideshare partnerships or community transport).
- Support growth in the night-time economy.

### 4.3.3 Infrastructure

Blowhole Point Reserve is one of Kiama's most visited precincts, providing access to the Blowhole, Lighthouse, Visitors Centre, Pilots Cottage, Kiama Harbour Cabins, and views over Kiama Harbour. However, the area faces congestion during peak periods, limiting visitor access and amenity. Comprehensive masterplanning is required to activate Council-owned assets, improve traffic flow, and enhance the overall visitor experience.

Wayfinding and interpretive signage across the region is another gap in visitor servicing. At Blowhole Point, heritage-style directional signage is consistent with Council's approach but lacks impact as an entry statement for Kiama's major attraction. Interpretive signage at the Blowhole is showing signs of wear, and Coast Walk signage, while informative, appears dated and disengaging.

Council has completed a signage audit, which now needs to be consolidated into a Wayfinding and Interpretive Signage Strategy with priority actions to:

- Refresh interpretive storytelling aligned with the Kiama brand.
- Create strong sense-of-arrival statements at key attractions and gateways.
- Integrate directional signage with precinct development plans.
- Reflect community values and place identity as part of broader place branding.

These actions will deliver a more seamless and engaging visitor experience, strengthen Kiama's identity through impactful arrival statements, reduce congestion, and enhance liveability, ultimately improving destination perception and meeting the expectations of high-yield travellers.

## 4.4 Industry Skills & Partnerships

### Supporting Goals:

**1** *Build Industry Capability & Workforce*

**2** *Grow High-Value Visitation*

**3** *Diversify Experiences & Markets*

### 4.4.1 Workforce and Land-Use Planning

Tourism and hospitality are major employers in Kiama, supporting over 2,200 jobs (direct and indirect). However, several workforce challenges affect the visitor experience:

- Seasonal nature of work leads to casualisation and instability.
- Housing affordability in Kiama limits workforce availability, with short-term holiday letting further reducing rental accommodation for workers.

Local Government planning and approvals play a critical role in addressing these challenges, as housing availability directly impacts employment. Kiama's Draft Employment Lands Strategy (2026) highlights the need to improve land-use management, including mixed-use precincts.

To further support tourism-related uses, it is recommended that Council's Development Control Plan (DCP) is reviewed to encourage tourism investment, for example mixed-use precincts that combine

accommodation, dining and cultural spaces; simplifying processes to allow for farmgate and food tourism activities in rural zones and removing barriers for eco-retreats or boutique stays.

Council will also advocate through Business Illawarra and RDA Illawarra-Shoalhaven to ensure visitor economy priorities are reflected in regional economic development agendas and funding pathways.

#### 4.4.2 Industry Capability

Bookable, scheduled products are essential for planning and conversion. Many operators lack booking systems or distribution connections (including the VIC), creating a perception of “little to do,” which suppresses length of stay and spend.

Destination Sydney Surrounds South (DSSS) plays the lead role in industry upskilling and capability development across the region. Council will support DSSS in developing programs, promoting uptake among local operators, and ensuring alignment with Kiama’s destination priorities.

In addition, Council will administer its own Destination Partner workshops, focused on practical, locally tailored sessions for operators who require entry-level support or prefer a community-based approach. These workshops will complement DSSS programs and address gaps in digital readiness, packaging, and experience development.

Cluster-based mentoring will help operators co-develop and upgrade experiences around destination themes. Where gaps persist, Council may consider VIC-led pilot experiences (e.g., guided walks) with pathways to private operation.

### 4.5 Night-Time and Cultural Economy

#### Supporting Goals:

1

**Night-Time & Cultural Economy**

2

**Grow High-Value Visitation**

The NSW 24-Hour Economy reforms provide Council with a practical framework and new State-level tools (such as funding, regulatory changes, precinct models, transport, and safety measures) that make it easier and faster to approve, fund, and manage night-time activation while reducing legal and regulatory constraints.

Council is currently developing a Night-Time Economy (NTE) Strategy as the first step toward trialling a Special Entertainment Precinct (SEP) under the State model. This approach will concentrate nightlife in areas where residential impacts are manageable, balancing vibrancy with community amenity.

Creating precincts that prioritise pedestrian zones and walkability over traffic management can reduce congestion and activate town centres. For example, the Kiama Town Centre Study (2019) identifies a ‘pedestrian priority zone’ within a section of Terralong Street between Collins Street and Manning Street where these areas could be redesigned to be a slow speed environment with temporary and / or permanent street closure, or potentially a shared zone with a 10km speed limit. This can be further explored during peak times – such as evenings, weekends, and for events. Extending alfresco dining into this zone during events has created vibrancy, increased hospitality capacity, and deliver flow-on benefits to the visitor economy through additional jobs.

Delivering these initiatives will create a stronger sense of place, improve connectivity between precinct areas, and assist in the development of Kiama’s Night-Time Economy.



## PART 5. Implementation and Action Plan

### 5.1 Role of Local Government

The Strategy acknowledges that not all recommended actions are within the direct control of the Kiama Municipal Council and will require collaboration at various State Government departments to achieve outcomes.

Council's role in the visitor economy includes two key dimensions:

- (i) Core Responsibilities (Statutory and Service Delivery)
  - Providing and maintaining public infrastructure, facilities, and amenities that support visitor use.
  - Ensuring precinct beautification through landscaping, public artworks, seating, lighting, and other place-making and safety initiatives.
  - Delivering visitor information through wayfinding, interpretive, and directional signage on roads and paths.
  - Creating a supportive and transparent regulatory environment through planning approvals and alignment with relevant planning policies and strategies that encourage desirable development.
- (ii) Strategic Leadership and Partnership Roles
  - Setting a clear strategic direction for Destination Kiama and providing leadership in coordinated destination management and promotion.
  - Operating the Kiama Visitor Information Centre (VIC) and providing visitor information services.
  - Supporting the local visitor economy industry through capacity-building, business support, and opportunities for collaboration and networking.
  - Regional branding, destination marketing, and promotion to drive visitation and support local businesses.
  - Enabling and supporting the industry through initiatives such as training opportunities, access to grants, event attraction, and event coordination.
  - Advocating for the industry by lobbying for tourism-related investment and ensuring Kiama's visitor-economy priorities are represented in regional and State planning through partners such as Business Illawarra, RDA Illawarra-Shoalhaven, DSSS and local Members.
  - Collaborating with neighbouring councils and working with State Government to improve access to tourism precincts, including advocacy for public transport.

### 5.2 Implementation Framework

This Implementation Framework outlines how the Visitor Economy Strategy will be delivered, including timeframes, roles, resourcing and governance arrangements.

#### Timeline

The recommendations and actions within the Kiama Visitor Economy Strategy will be implemented over the period 2026–2035, aligning with the strategic direction of the Destination NSW Visitor Economy Strategy 2035.

#### Delivery approach

The identified priority areas for action provide a practical roadmap to activate the Strategy's focus areas through measurable actions. Phased delivery, shared responsibilities and strong governance will support a visitor economy that is resilient, community-supported and economically sustainable.

## Roles and responsibilities

|                                                                                                                                                                  |                                                                                                                                                                                                       |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                  |
|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
|  <h3>Deliver</h3> <p>Kiama Municipal Council (KMC) will coordinate delivery</p> |  <h3>Partner</h3> <p>KMC will partner with Destination Sydney Surrounds South, and other state/federal agencies.</p> |  <h3>Advocate</h3> <p>KMC will advocate for Kiama's visitor-economy priorities and support partners to co-design and deliver initiatives.</p> |
|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|

|                                   |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                      |
|-----------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>Phasing</b>                    | <p>Actions will be prioritised and delivered across:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Short term (1–2 years)</li> <li>• Medium term (3–4 years)</li> <li>• Long term (5+ years)</li> </ul>                                                                                               |
| <b>Resourcing</b>                 | <p>Funding will be sourced through:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• KMC budgets (aligned with the Delivery Program and Operational Plan)</li> <li>• NSW and Federal government grants</li> <li>• Private sector investment</li> <li>• Partnerships and co-funded initiatives</li> </ul> |
| <b>Governance &amp; Reporting</b> | <p>Quarterly implementation updates will be provided to TEAC and via Council's Delivery Program updates.</p>                                                                                                                                                                                         |

## 5.3 Priority Areas for Action

The following priority actions translate the Strategy's goals into practical, achievable initiatives, with delivery responsibility and indicative timeframes identified.

| Strategic Goal: Grow High Value Visitation                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                             |                |                   |
|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------|-------------------|
| Focus Area 4.1 Destination Brand and Positioning                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                       |                |                   |
| Refresh the Destination Kiama brand with village place-narratives, strong storytelling and unified promise, emphasising the distinctive competitive advantage, and year-round experiences, using 'bold storytelling' and 'data-led marketing' consistent with the Destination NSW (DNSW).              | <b>Deliver</b> | <b>Short Term</b> |
| Develop a high-value visitor program that targets premium and international audiences through curated premium content and itineraries, highlighting boutique stays, elevated dining, wellness experiences and scenic slow-travel, supporting the State focus on high-yield, experience-led visitation. | <b>Deliver</b> | <b>Short Term</b> |
| Enhance data capture on visitor spend, experience usage, accommodation performance and seasonality to inform targeted high-value visitor attraction strategies, aligning with the DNSW emphasis on real-time insights and data-led decision-making.                                                    | <b>Deliver</b> | <b>Short Term</b> |

|                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                |                           |                    |
|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------|--------------------|
| Work with DSSS, DNSW, and neighbouring Local Government Areas (LGA) to position Kiama within premium touring routes (Grand Pacific Drive (GPD), wine & produce trails, and nature-based and soft adventure multi-day journeys).                                                                                                                                | <b>Partner</b>            | <b>Medium Term</b> |
| Support operators to become trade-ready and digitally bookable through capability building, mentoring, and integrations by partnering with DSSS and DNSW.                                                                                                                                                                                                      | <b>Partner</b>            | <b>Short Term</b>  |
| Partner with GPD and DSSS to create itineraries, trade collateral, marketing content and partnerships tailored to Western Sydney International (WSI) airport aligned international markets and Western Sydney leisure audiences.                                                                                                                               | <b>Partner</b>            | <b>Medium Term</b> |
| Continue to foster resident participation in tourism planning and delivery through active engagement, advisory groups and support for community-led projects.                                                                                                                                                                                                  | <b>Partner</b>            | <b>Short Term</b>  |
| Continue partnerships with DSSS and DNSW to extend reach through integrated marketing campaigns, international trade shows, and digital platforms.                                                                                                                                                                                                             | <b>Partner</b>            | <b>Short Term</b>  |
| <b>Strategic Goal: Diversify Experiences and Markets</b>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                       |                           |                    |
| <b>Focus Area 4.2 Experiences &amp; Product Development</b>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                    |                           |                    |
| Advance the Kiama Harbour Revitalisation Plan (2021) with leadership from the State Government. Consider defined links between Manning Street and Kiama Harbour via boardwalk and include placemaking components such as wayfinding, lighting, public art, precinct activation and lease resolutions.                                                          | <b>Advocate / Partner</b> | <b>Medium Term</b> |
| Blowhole Point upgrade. Reconsider the delivery of visitor servicing and the location and experience of the Visitor Information Centre (VIC), exploring permitted uses for Pilots Cottage; upgrade interpretation (geology + Dharawal stories); as well as upgrade of the viewing platform, signage and night-time viewing of the Blowhole (via illumination). | <b>Advocate / Partner</b> | <b>Short Term</b>  |
| Support experience development across wellness, agritourism, marine tourism and endorsed Aboriginal visitor-ready products, including seasonal trading permits for pop-up experiences. Work with Council's Property and Commercial Team to assess marine tourism experience feasibility and improve water-craft licensing through operator collaboration.      | <b>Advocate / Deliver</b> | <b>Short Term</b>  |
| Work with Council's Infrastructure team to devise an 'Active Transport Strategy' for the municipality. Include Kiama Coast Walk as flagship experience; identifying amenity/interpretation upgrades and southern extension to Gerroa.                                                                                                                          | <b>Deliver / Partner</b>  | <b>Medium Term</b> |
| Implement the recommendations from the Kiama Major Events Report (2024), prioritising events in shoulder/off-peak periods, mid-week business events, and integrated itinerary packaging to extend visitor stays.                                                                                                                                               | <b>Partner</b>            | <b>Medium Term</b> |
| Grow signature events, including the Kiama Winter Festival, to strengthen creative experiences and anchor off-peak visitation.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                 | <b>Deliver</b>            | <b>Short Term</b>  |
| Investigate a regional South Coast Tasting Trail, enabling producer-venue partnerships, co-marketing of farm experiences and workshops, and bookable itineraries supported by neighbouring Councils and DSSS.                                                                                                                                                  | <b>Partner</b>            | <b>Short Term</b>  |

|                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                    |                    |                     |
|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------|---------------------|
| Advocate for a pre-feasibility assessment for a Bouldering Park attraction on the Bombo Headland, acknowledging landownership complexities.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                        | Advocate           | Medium Term         |
| Support Aboriginal-led tourism ventures through engagement, training and partnerships, embedding actions linked to the Reconciliation Action Plan and collaborating with the Local Aboriginal Advisory Committee.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                  | Partner            | Medium Term         |
| <b>Strategic Goal: Enhance Infrastructure and Accessibility</b>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                    |                    |                     |
| <b>Focus Area: 4.3 Infrastructure, Access and Sustainability</b>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                   |                    |                     |
| Undertake accommodation demand and feasibility assessments to guide land use planning and support private sector investment in quality, strategically located visitor accommodation, aligning with the State objective to unlock new accommodation supply where appropriate.                                                                                                                                                                       | Deliver            | Short Term          |
| Develop a data-led Wayfinding, Signage and Interpretation Strategy to refresh storytelling, improve arrival and directional signage, and prioritise accessibility, amenities and sustainable transport upgrades, aligned with existing data, precinct plans, the planned 'Active Transport Strategy' and 'Night-Time Economy Strategy', and coordinated through Council's Capital Works Program.                                                   | Deliver            | Medium Term         |
| Champion the Visitor Economy as a regional economic pillar through coordinated advocacy with Business Illawarra, Regional Development Australia (RDA) Illawarra-Shoalhaven, DSSS, neighbouring LGAs, and local MPs/Ministers. Advocate for the inclusion of Kiama's priority projects and experience development needs in regional economic development plans, State infrastructure and transport strategies, and relevant ministerial portfolios. | Advocate           | Short – Medium Term |
| Advocate through the Draft Illawarra Shoalhaven Strategic Regional Integrated Transport Plan (SIRTP) for improved road and rail connections, including WSI Airport connectivity, supporting the State's aviation-led growth and visitor dispersal priorities.                                                                                                                                                                                      | Advocate           | Short Term          |
| Improved transport solutions to address gaps affecting access to key tourism products, the night-time economy and town centres, partnering with Kiama Business Network (KBN) and adjoining LGAs to assess taxi, rideshare and cross-boundary needs and explore collaborative responses.                                                                                                                                                            | Advocate           | Medium Term         |
| Reinitiate master planning for Blowhole Point, including assessment of opportunities for high-quality accommodation and precinct enhancements aligned with Crown Land and community values.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                        | Advocate / Partner | Long Term           |
| <b>Strategic Goal: Build Industry Capability and Workforce</b>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                     |                    |                     |
| <b>Focus Area: 4.4 Industry Skills &amp; Partnerships</b>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                          |                    |                     |
| Support DSSS capability programs and local workshops to improve online bookability, trade readiness and digital capability across the visitor economy.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                             | Partner            | Short Term          |
| Develop a 'Visitor Economy Data Dashboard' or build into the Destination Kiama Partnership Program 'Data Insights', supporting benchmarking and performance tracking aligned with DNSW's Visitor Economy Strategy 2035.                                                                                                                                                                                                                            | Deliver            | Short Term          |

|                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                              |                           |                    |
|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------|--------------------|
| Identify high-potential local operators and provide targeted mentoring and support to enable the growth and evolution of quality tourism products and experiences.                                                                                                                           | <b>Deliver</b>            | <b>Short Term</b>  |
| Prepare a business case for the Kiama Visitor Information Centre (VIC) to explore delivery of "owned experiences" that fill identified product gaps.                                                                                                                                         | <b>Deliver</b>            | <b>Medium Term</b> |
| Support Local Housing Strategy (LHS) actions that improve affordable housing access for tourism and hospitality workers, strengthening workforce resilience.                                                                                                                                 | <b>Advocate</b>           | <b>Medium Term</b> |
| <b>Strategic Goal: Activate the Night-Time and Cultural Economy</b>                                                                                                                                                                                                                          |                           |                    |
| <b>Focus Area: 4.5 Night-Time and Cultural Economy</b>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                       |                           |                    |
| Deliver coordinated night-time activation by implementing the Night-Time Economy (NTE) Strategy and progressing Special Entertainment Precinct (SEP) planning, aligning with the NSW 24-Hour Economy Strategy and the events-led growth objectives of the NSW Visitor Economy Strategy 2035. | <b>Deliver</b>            | <b>Short Term</b>  |
| Use the Global Transport Management Plan to enable timed street closures and pedestrian-only zones on Terralong Street to support evening events, outdoor dining and cultural activation.                                                                                                    | <b>Deliver</b>            | <b>Short Term</b>  |
| Support NSW Government, Office of the 24hr Economy initiatives that promote local venue collective to access funding for developing night-time activations                                                                                                                                   | <b>Advocate</b>           | <b>Short Term</b>  |
| Support community organisations to activate Hindmarsh Park with events such as twilight movies and live music and other cultural programming, enhancing after-dark amenity for residents and visitors.                                                                                       | <b>Advocate / Partner</b> | <b>Short Term</b>  |
| Support live-music venues and outdoor performance spaces through small grants, streamlined approvals and alignment with NTE precinct planning to grow a diverse cultural calendar and year-round vibrancy.                                                                                   | <b>Deliver</b>            | <b>Short Term</b>  |

### 5.3 Resourcing the Visitor Economy Strategy

Delivery of the Visitor Economy Strategy will rely on a combination of Council investment, State and Federal funding, and private sector involvement. Council's role will focus on enabling and leveraging investment, rather than funding all initiatives directly.

Actions within the Strategy will be prioritised through Council's Delivery Program and Operational Plan, ensuring alignment with available resources and broader organisational priorities. External grant funding and co-investment opportunities will be actively pursued to extend the impact of Council funding.

Partnerships will continue to play a central role in delivery, particularly with Destination NSW, Destination Sydney Surrounds South, the Office of the 24-Hour Economy Commissioner and Grand Pacific Drive / neighbouring council partners. These relationships support access to marketing programs, precinct-based funding and regional initiatives that Kiama cannot deliver independently.

Over time, increased emphasis will be placed on attracting private sector investment to support accommodation, experience development and destination infrastructure that contributes to higher-value visitation and sustainable growth.



## PART 6: Monitoring, Evaluation and Governance

The successful delivery of the Implementation and Action Plan (PART 5) requires structured monitoring, transparent evaluation, and strong governance. As Council, industry and community partners work together to activate the recommended actions, ongoing measurement is essential to ensure the Strategy remains effective, accountable and aligned with Kiama's long-term vision.

Building on the phased implementation approach, partnership model, and resourcing framework established in PART 5, this Monitoring, Evaluation and Governance Framework provides the mechanism for tracking progress, understanding outcomes, and adapting priorities as conditions change. This ensures that implementation is not only action-oriented, but outcome-driven, supporting a resilient, community-aligned and high-performing visitor economy.

Monitoring and evaluation processes are to:

- Track implementation progress across all strategic goals and focus areas.
- Measure the economic, social and environmental impacts of the visitor economy.
- Detect emerging risks, gaps or unintended consequences requiring adaptation.
- Enable evidence-based decision-making and strategic investment.
- Strengthen accountability to residents, industry partners and funding bodies.

These mechanisms align with the NSW Visitor Economy Strategy 2035<sup>5</sup>, which will be delivered in three statewide phases:

| 2025                                                       | 2026 | 2027                                                                                                                                                  | 2028 | 2029 | 2030 | 2031                                                                                                  | 2032 | 2033 | 2034 | 2035 |
|------------------------------------------------------------|------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------|------|------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------|------|------|------|
| <b>Transition:</b><br>4.5% annual growth in visitor spend. |      | <b>Take Off:</b><br>5% annual growth, supported by increased international arrivals coinciding with the Western Sydney International Airport opening. |      |      |      | <b>Sustainable Growth:</b><br>5.3% annual growth, driven by consolidation of new visitor experiences. |      |      |      |      |

To maintain consistency with statewide projections, Kiama's targets have been modelled using an average 4.9% compound annual growth rate over the life of the Strategy.

### 6.1 Purpose of Monitoring and Evaluation

The Monitoring and Evaluation Framework assesses both delivery of actions and achievement of strategic outcomes. It ensures that the Kiama Visitor Economy Strategy remains aligned with:

- Destination NSW's Visitor Economy Strategy 2035
- Destination Sydney Surrounds South's Destination Management Plan
- Council's broader strategic planning framework

This approach emphasises value and sustainability over volume, with priority placed on:

- Visitor yield
- Length of stay
- Seasonality and dispersal
- Community amenity and benefits
- Industry capability and resilience

<sup>5</sup> <https://www.destinationnsw.com.au/about-us/visitor-economy-strategy-2035>

## 6.2 Key Performance Indicators (KPIs)

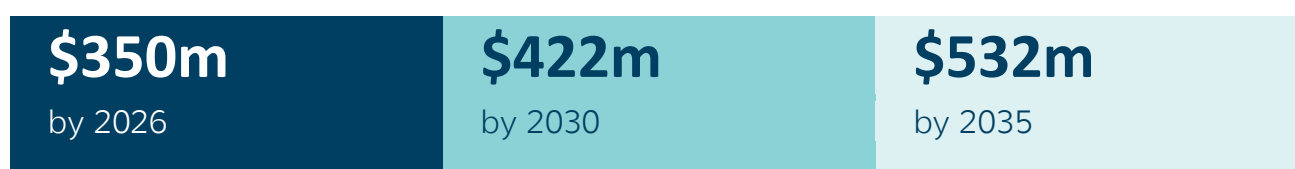
KPIs are aligned with the Strategy's five Strategic Goals and will be monitored annually. They draw on a combination of quantitative and qualitative data to measure performance, identify trends, and support transparent reporting.

### Visitor Economy Performance Targets for Kiama by 2035



\*The NSW statewide strategy projects a split of 74% Domestic and 26% International visitation including both overnight stays and day trips.

### Total Visitor Spend Targets



Performance will also be measured through yield indicators including average spend per visitor, spend per night, and length of stay.

### Strategic Goal 1: Grow High-Value Visitation

|                                 |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                  |
|---------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>Strategic Goal</b>           | Grow High-Value Visitation                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                       |
| <b>Focus Area(s)</b>            | 4.1 Destination Brand & Marketing                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                |
| <b>Intended Outcome</b>         | Increased visitor yield and longer stays, particularly outside peak periods                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                      |
| <b>Key Performance Measures</b> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Average spend per visitor and per night</li> <li>Average length of stay</li> <li>Proportion of overnight vs day-trip visitors</li> <li>Shoulder and off-peak visitation share</li> <li>Campaign conversion metrics (bookings, enquiries)</li> <li>Visitor yield growth relative to DNSW benchmarks</li> <li>Community sentiment toward tourism</li> </ul> |
| <b>Data Source</b>              | DNSW / Tourism Research Australia (TRA)<br>Destination Kiama analytics<br>Accommodation data                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                     |
| <b>Review Frequency</b>         | Monthly (internal);<br>Annual (public report)                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                    |

## Strategic Goal 2: Diversify Experiences and Markets

Diversifying the experience offering (Focus Area 4.2) is a key mechanism for increasing the average length of stay, currently estimated at 2.6 nights. Establishing accurate baselines for experience supply, event impact, and accommodation performance in Year 1 is essential to measure future growth and inform product development priorities.

|                                 |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                    |
|---------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>Strategic Goal</b>           | Diversify Experiences and Markets                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                  |
| <b>Focus Area(s)</b>            | 4.2 Experience & Product Development                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                               |
| <b>Intended Outcome</b>         | Broader, bookable experience mix driving dispersal, seasonality and mid-week visitation                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                            |
| <b>Key Performance Measures</b> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Number of bookable experiences</li><li>• Number of Traditional Owner endorsed Aboriginal enterprises participating in supported pathways</li><li>• Number of new agritourism, wellness and creative experiences launched</li><li>• Visitor dispersal across villages and precincts</li><li>• Event attendance and economic impact (shoulder and mid-week)</li><li>• Improved mid-week visitation trends</li><li>• Occupancy rates across all accommodation types</li><li>• Length of stay uplift</li></ul> |
| <b>Data Source</b>              | Partnership data<br>DSSS / DNSW<br>Event evaluations<br>REMPAN<br>Spendmapp<br>Localis / direct operator data                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                      |
| <b>Review Frequency</b>         | Year 1: Establish baselines<br>Year 2: Introduce support systems / repeat surveys<br>Ongoing: 5% annual growth target                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                              |

## Strategic Goal 3: Enhance Infrastructure and Accessibility

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|---------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>Strategic Goal</b>           | Enhance Infrastructure and Accessibility                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                        |
| <b>Focus Area(s)</b>            | 4.3 Infrastructure, Access & Sustainability                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                     |
| <b>Intended Outcome</b>         | Improved visitor experience, reduced congestion and increased investment readiness                                                                                                                                                                                                              |
| <b>Key Performance Measures</b> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Visitor satisfaction with access, amenities and wayfinding (by season)</li><li>• Congestion indicators at high-use sites</li><li>• Progression of priority infrastructure projects</li><li>• Private sector accommodation investment activity</li></ul> |
| <b>Data Source</b>              | Visitor surveys<br>Council capital works<br>Planning data                                                                                                                                                                                                                                       |
| <b>Review Frequency</b>         | Annual                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                          |

#### Strategic Goal 4: Build Industry Capability and Workforce

|                                 |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                |
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| <b>Strategic Goal</b>           | Build Industry Capability and Workforce                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                        |
| <b>Focus Area(s)</b>            | 4.4 Industry Skills & Partnerships                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                             |
| <b>Intended Outcome</b>         | More resilient, trade-ready and digitally enabled visitor economy                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                              |
| <b>Key Performance Measures</b> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• % of operators digitally bookable</li> <li>• Participation in capability programs</li> <li>• Operator engagement in data-sharing initiatives</li> <li>• Workforce vacancy and turnover indicators (where available)</li> <li>• Number of businesses engaged in training/mentoring</li> <li>• Skills gap identification completed with Kiama Business Network</li> <li>• Community sentiment toward tourism</li> </ul> |
| <b>Data Source</b>              | DSSS programs<br>Destination Kiama partnership data<br>ABS / industry data<br>ADTW                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                             |
| <b>Review Frequency</b>         | Annual                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                         |

#### Strategic Goal 5: Activate the Night-Time & Cultural Economy

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|---------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>Strategic Goal</b>           | Activate the Night-Time & Cultural Economy                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                        |
| <b>Focus Area(s)</b>            | 4.5 Night-Time & Cultural Economy                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                 |
| <b>Intended Outcome</b>         | Increased evening activity and spend while maintaining community amenity                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                          |
| <b>Key Performance Measures</b> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• After-6pm visitor spend indicators</li> <li>• Number and diversity of night-time and cultural events</li> <li>• Venue participation in NTE initiatives</li> <li>• Community sentiment and amenity feedback (NTE specific)</li> <li>• Resident perception of safety &amp; vibrancy after dark.</li> </ul> |
| <b>Data Source</b>              | Spendmapp<br>Business survey<br>Community feedback                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                |
| <b>Review Frequency</b>         | Year 1 → Baseline surveys<br>Year 2+ → Annual tracking                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                            |

## 6.3 Reporting, Transparency and Governance

Strong governance is essential to ensure credibility, accountability, and alignment across Council and its partners. The visitor economy is dynamic and subject to market trends, economic shocks, climate events, and technological shifts, therefore governance must be adaptive and collaborative.

### 6.3.1 Governance Framework:

- Tourism & Economic Advisory Committee (TEAC):

TEAC will play a central role in monitoring implementation, providing advice, and ensuring actions remain aligned with community priorities and strategic goals. TEAC will receive quarterly progress reports on the VES Action Plan, including KPI updates, emerging risks, and recommendations for adjustments.

- Data Sharing & Transparency:

Council will distribute data highlights for partners to better understand performance metrics and visitor insights while supporting collaborative decision-making.

- Integration with Council Planning:

All actions in this Strategy will be embedded in Council's Delivery Program and Operational Plan, ensuring accountability through annual reporting. Progress will be reflected in Council's Annual Report, demonstrating how visitor economy initiatives are enacted and contribute to broader community outcomes.

- Interdepartmental Coordination:

Relevant Council departments (Planning, Infrastructure, Events, Economic Development) will maintain interconnected plans to ensure actions are actionable and mutually reinforcing. Cross-team governance will be supported through scheduled coordination meetings.

### 6.3.2 Adaptive Management Principles:

- Annual review of the Strategy's relevance and priorities.
- Flexibility to revise KPIs and actions as conditions change.
- Rapid response protocols for crises (e.g., bushfires, floods, pandemics).
- Trial-and-learn approaches: pilot initiatives tested, evaluated, and scaled.

### 6.3.3 Public Reporting:

Council will publish an Annual Visitor Economy Report, shared via the website, community forums, and business networks. This report will include:

- KPI performance and trend analysis.
- Case studies of successful initiatives.
- Financial overview and investment leverage.
- Community and industry sentiment.
- Mechanisms for feedback to adjust programs where concerns arise