



# KAREN RENKEMA-LANG & TEAM

## INDEPENDENT YOU'RE IN S.A.F.E. HANDS

### S.A.F.E. KIAMA - ENVIRONMENT POLICY

KIAMA • MINNAMURRA • GAINSBOROUGH • KIAMA DOWNS • JAMBEROO • GERRINGONG • GERROA • NOVEMBER 2021

#### FOUNDATIONS FOR A HEALTHY AND RESILIENT COMMUNITY

S.A.F.E. Kiama acknowledge that ecological diversity and social harmony are the foundations of a healthy and resilient community.

The health of a community is inextricably linked to the health of all living things. As such our natural surroundings, waterways, beaches, flora, fauna, farmlands, and wildlife corridors should be valued and managed as the important asset they are. As a community we have a responsibility to future generations to protect and preserve these assets.

#### THE ROLE OF LOCAL GOVERNMENT

As community leaders, local councils are particularly well-placed to drive action on climate change through the services they deliver, their legislative and regulatory functions, and their roles as major employers and significant procurers.

Many Australian local governments have set emission reduction targets, which combined will contribute to well over ninety percent of Australia's greenhouse gas emissions targets. But more is needed and action is required to meet the targets.

The Australian Local Government Climate Review 2021<sup>1</sup> provides a comprehensive analysis of climate change actions, barriers and opportunities facing councils and communities. Eighty three percent of the 272 responses to the survey conducted by Better Futures Australia reported that climate change has already impacted their local community or council operations.

Of concern is that only 10 percent of respondents felt that their council or their community was well-prepared to respond to the impacts of climate change. This is a serious discrepancy and highlights the urgency for all levels of government and all sectors of society to work together to face the climate challenge.

#### ADAPTATION AND BETTER MANAGEMENT OF OUR NATURAL ASSETS

Council can do far more to preserve and protect our vulnerable land and marine species, ecological communities, wildlife corridors, and ultimately the people who live and work in our municipality.

Kiama Council have developed *many* plans detailing how they can do this better.

<sup>1</sup> Ironbark Sustainability and Local Governments for Sustainability (ICLEI Oceania) <https://ironbarksustainability.apptx.com/s/p6ylewyyv92c6rkfh2k44vwj9b6r9ltc>

These include the thirty plus [plans of management](#), the [scoping study](#) of the Kiama Council's Coastal Management Program, and the Climate Change [Adaptation Strategy and Action Plan](#). Collectively these have cost Kiama ratepayers millions of dollars to develop over the past decades.

Some of these plans are relatively recent (e.g. [Crooked River Coastal Zone Management Plan](#), and the [Coastal Zone Management Plan](#) for the Minnamurra River Estuary) and some were prepared in the 1990s (the [Jerrara Dam Plan of Management](#) and the [Spring Creek Plan of Management](#)).

These plans contain very valuable information about our natural assets and recommended actions required to protect and preserve them. Yet many of these actions appear to have been ignored or sidelined.

As a result, pressure from the NSW government, industry and developers is being applied to re-zone land in our municipality *without* due consideration of the impact on our waterways, sewage capacity, land and marine biodiversity and wildlife habitats. Combined, this is having a progressive and potentially devastating impact on some of the most important assets in our municipality.

**S.A.F.E. Kiama** will call for a review of these plans to identify the obvious or easy things that can be readily dealt with, and to prioritise and rationalise other actions so that work can commence, within budgetary constraints, to protect and preserve these valuable assets.

Our Council and our community have the knowledge and resources to make a difference, not just within our municipality, but more broadly. We can and should showcase pathways to a healthier natural world for people and animals, to future-proof jobs in growing clean energy industries, and to provide protection against extreme weather events, storm surges, fire and heatwaves.

## EMISSIONS REDUCTION

**S.A.F.E. Kiama** fully supports Kiama Council's ambition to achieve 50% of electricity from renewable sources by 2025 and net zero emissions by 2031 for all of its operations, facilities and services. We also applaud Kiama Council's achievements to date at reducing our emissions from on-site solar generation and upgrades to street lighting.

**S.A.F.E. Kiama** will advocate for the actions identified in the Kiama Council Corporate Emissions Reduction Plan to be given the priority they deserve to ensure Kiama Council's emission reduction and renewable energy targets are met.

In particular **S.A.F.E. Kiama** will advocate for development of a clean energy transition roadmap that

- provides incentives and strengthens relevant Development Control Plans to ensure all new developments have energy efficiency plans over and above the minimum requirements of the BASIX certification (well-designed buildings based on the principles of passive solar design can dramatically reduce heating and cooling costs as well as the carbon footprint of our built environment)
- provides access to facilities that turn our rubbish into energy
- encourages and supports local businesses to reduce emissions
- includes collaboration with energy companies to encourage residents to use community batteries and other sources of green energy, and
- reduces traffic and transport emissions (for example by electrifying all council vehicles, introducing electric shuttle services across the municipality, introducing electric charging stations in public places, and completing and implementing an updated Kiama Bike and Cycling Strategy).

## LIVEABILITY, URBAN GREENING AND VEGETATION MANAGEMENT

Healthy communities need green space in urban environments. They need healthy, diverse eco-systems and wildlife corridors. Many concerns expressed by families and young people in our municipality are validated by the poor 'liveability' findings as detailed in the Illawarra Shoalhaven Local Health District Needs Assessment, particularly in relation to Minnamurra, Kiama Downs and Kiama Heights.

An evidenced based and considered approach to vegetation and tree management across our municipality will result in increased absorption of carbon as trees and plants grow.

### Did you know?

- planting of particular species can provide a barrier to protect homes against bushfires<sup>2</sup>
- acacia trees are super carbon sequestrators and extract nitrogen from the atmosphere (so don't need fertilizing);
- that sea grasses and mangroves store vast amounts of carbon; or
- that the ability of trees and vegetation to acquire carbon have a significant impact on rainfall<sup>3</sup>.

Mangrove forests play a crucial role in the ecosystems of many plants, animals, fish and birds, and they play an important role in safeguarding coastal communities against cyclones and storms. These have to be amongst the most valuable assets in our community.

**S.A.F.E. Kiama** will advocate for a comprehensive urban greening strategy and broader vegetation management plan for Kiama. We will also advocate for the NSW Government to develop detailed [bio-regional mapping](#) of high value environmental and agricultural land in the Kiama Municipality. These will provide the basis of new and stronger controls in the Kiama Local Environmental Plan and Development Control Plans to ensure that our most valuable assets can be preserved and protected.

Urban greening and the planting of appropriate trees and shrubs in our towns and villages will not only improve the monetary value of our real estate, it will also improve air quality, provide shelter for social interaction, assist with the management of stormwater, reduce the urban heat island effect, provide space for urban food production, and provide habitats to regenerate biodiversity.

## LITTER REDUCTION

The people who live in the towns and villages across our municipality have a great sense of responsibility for keeping our oceans, waterways, streets, parks and rivers free from litter and pollutants. Many volunteer in local initiatives such as Plastic Free Kiama, Blue Kiama, the AUSMAP microplastic beach surveys, and the NSW EPA litter reduction pilot. Others regularly collect and responsibly dispose of rubbish from our public spaces as a personal service.

However, management of litter is an ongoing challenge across our municipality. As a tourist town, the cost of managing litter escalates during peak holiday seasons. As the rate of visitors escalates with year-round tourism being promoted, the cost to manage litter will also increase, at the expense of ratepayers.

Preventing litter and plastics from entering the environment is the most cost-effective measure that can be put in place. Some of the most needless sources of waste come from unnecessary use of plastic containers and packaging such as bottled water, plastic straws, take-away coffee, food

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<sup>2</sup> <https://deepgreenpermaculture.com/home/about/>

<sup>3</sup> Professor Mark Adams – Swinburne University <https://www.swinburne.edu.au/news/2021/09/world-leading-swinburne-research-will-influence-climate-modelling/>

containers, food wraps and zip lock bags. Plastic flowers left in cemeteries are also a major source of plastics entering our wetlands, storm water systems and oceans.

**S.A.F.E. Kiama** will advocate for Council to support the NSW EPA litter reduction pilot program and to implement recommended actions such as

- raising public awareness of the damage caused by rubbish, chemicals and plastics that often make their way into our soils, waterways and oceans
- providing incentives for community members, visitors, developers and local businesses to better manage waste
- introducing a ban on the most problematic single use plastic
- providing opportunities and incentives for local businesses to participate in the circular economy (sharing, leasing, reusing, repairing, refurbishing and recycling existing materials and products as long as possible)
- holding competitions and prizes for schools and community groups to identify the most effective and innovative approaches for improved waste management
- introducing waste management infrastructure such as sea bins, drain baskets, gross pollutant traps, and
- introducing and enforcing greater penalties for littering or disposing of waste irresponsibly.

## S.A.F.E. KIAMA PRIORITIES

1. Ensure Council's financial position is known and understood by all ratepayers, and that Council staff have the skills necessary to develop, monitor and enact a 10 year plan to strengthen Council's economic base
2. Provide opportunities for diversification of local businesses so that our economic base is resilient and able to provide interesting, well paid and secure job opportunities.
3. Introduce greater transparency and accountability in the way Council conducts its business.
4. Tighten planning and development controls to stop unrestricted urban creep, over development and inappropriate development.
5. Develop and enact a plan to manage our natural environment more responsibly.

## MEET THE S.A.F.E. KIAMA CANDIDATES



### KAREN RENKEMA-LANG & TEAM



SARAH MARLAN



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## OUR MAIN POLICY IS AVAILABLE [HERE](#)

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**VISIT OUR WEBSITE:**

**SAFEKIAMA.ORG**

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**PRE-POLL 22 NOV-3 DEC, ELECTION DAY 4 DEC 2021**

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