



2026 Kiama Show - President's Report

The **178th Kiama Show**, held in January 2026, was delivered successfully and demonstrated continued strength in community participation, exhibitor engagement, volunteer contribution, and sponsorship support. Across many operational areas, participation and attendance were reported as **higher than the previous year**, confirming the ongoing relevance and value of the Kiama Show within the local and regional community.

A few areas achieved particularly strong outcomes in 2026. The operational income generated by the 2026 Kiama Show on Show days was supported by sponsorship and donations that ensured all costs were covered. The gates generated close to \$65k in revenue while other fund-raising initiatives such as the BBQ partnership with Kiama Rotary, the Show Café, Show Bar, Merchandise, Kewpie Doll Workshop, Stallholders and Hose Competition Entry and Camping contributed a further \$14k in revenue.

The **Entertainment Program** was well received overall, with several activities identified as standout successes. In particular, **Junior Tradies** attracted consistently positive feedback from families, especially those with younger children, and was recognised for its educational value, high engagement, and effective management under significant demand. Other entertainment offerings, including Matilda's Farmyard, Wow Reptiles, MadStyleMoto, and ShowMow Lawnmower Racing, also contributed positively to the visitor experience. Credit to Bree Cummins for shaping and realising this strong, budget friendly entertainment lineup.

The **Local and Homegrown Hub** recorded increased participation compared with the previous year and delivered a strong mix of quality local producers and artisans. Feedback highlighted the value of this space in showcasing regional talent and reinforcing the Show's connection to local industry and community enterprise. Congratulations to Nicole O'Brien on her success and coordination of the Local and Homegrown Hub.

The **Pavilion** experienced significant growth, with **2,843 entries received**, an increase from **2,079 entries in 2025**. This growth reflects strong community interest across arts, crafts, produce, and agriculture. While the increase placed pressure on available space and presentation logistics, it clearly demonstrated the importance of the Pavilion as a key draw card and core element of the Kiama Show. Congratulations to Sue Cox and her team of enthusiastic, positive and committed Stewards.

The **Horse and Cattle Sections** both reported higher participation than the previous year. Horse sections recorded strong class entry numbers across both days, testing the team of Stewards to ensure all those that entered were able to have a ride and enjoy the day. Congratulations to David Chittick and Denise Ovens for running a tight ship and a seamless operation. Meanwhile the cattle section received positive feedback regarding the quality of competition, community engagement, and hospitality provided to exhibitors. The passion displayed by the exhibitors in 2026 was obvious and the audience was very receptive to the commentary on the judging. Congratulations to Greg and Steven Chittick for another successful year in charge of the cattle section.

The **Show Bar** and the **Show Café** continued to operate as a growing and reliable revenue stream. The Show Bar generating \$4250 in revenue over the two days of the Show and the Show Café contributing \$3900 in income, selling over 350 scones! Both areas operated without incident received positive feedback from licensing authorities and benefited from strong volunteer support and local supplier partnerships. Congratulations to Coleen Burge for a successful return to the Show Café and Neil McLaren who continues to deliver annual Show Bar improvements and does a fantastic job of securing the Liquor License, the RSA trained volunteers and the drinks to go with it!

Sponsorship was a significant success in 2026. Sponsorship income offset approximately **80% of entertainment costs**, substantially reducing financial pressure on the Show and enabling the delivery of a high-quality program. Additionally, some local businesses agreed to deliver in-kind sponsorship in the form of catering for the Show Café and the President's Room. This outcome reflects strong relationships with existing sponsors, capacity to build new beneficial relationships and effective engagement with the local business community. Congratulations to Janine Williams for all the successes she has achieved as Sponsorship Coordinator. We witnessed some shining examples of how sponsorship can be a meaningful reciprocal relationship involving Kiama Show and the local business community.

Volunteers, Gates, Stallholders and Operations

Volunteer participation and gate operations were reported as effective, with improved coverage and support from partner organisations. Gate pricing changes implemented in 2026 were well received by patrons. Feedback highlighted the ongoing importance of clear signage, traffic flow management, and volunteer coordination to ensure patron safety and a positive and most importantly safe entry experience. Congratulations to Michelle Brennan for her commitment to this area of the Kiama Show. Your welcoming character, supportive nature and passion for the Show were key to the success of the volunteer experience and ongoing engagement.

The operational elements of the Grounds such as setting up gates early in the morning, parking the horse competitors, directing stallholders to their locations and providing the waste management around the grounds were delivered seamlessly. Year on year the product variety and income generated by the stallholders contributes to the overall success and vibe of the Show. Credit to Trevor Philis for the end-to-end coordination of stallholders and Sandy Rendel with his experienced team safely parking the horse competitors.

Key Learnings and Strategic Considerations

A consistent theme across multiple section reports was the need for **greater integration and cohesion across the Show**. While individual elements performed well, programming, announcements, sponsorship visibility, and educational content were often fragmented across the grounds. This disconnect highlighted the importance of The Grounds to the overall success of the customer experience. Whilst limited in space and layout, there is more that could be done to build better connections between different areas of the Show.

The most significant strategic recommendation arising from the 2026 reports is the establishment of a **centralised presentation stage with dedicated audio amplifiers** for mid show presentations, sponsor shoutouts and running the community events.

This approach is expected to improve the overall visitor experience, enhance sponsor value, and support a more cohesive event structure.

Feedback also identified concerns regarding the **cost and accessibility of carnival rides**, with reports that high pay-per-ride costs may discourage family attendance. Consideration has been given to alternative models which are debated by the Committee from time-to-time. Alternative models include sponsor-funded free entertainment, as a means of improving accessibility while maintaining financial sustainability.

Operational learnings further reinforced the importance of:

- continued investment in digital systems and automation
- improved signage and wayfinding across the grounds
- adequate shade and amenities for patrons, volunteers, and exhibitors
- clear role definition and workload distribution for key volunteer and committee positions
- clearly defined compliance requirements and commitment to stakeholder management.

In total of 86 improvements have been recommended in the 2026 Kiama Show Reports indicating that the Kiama Show Organising Committee remain motivated, innovative and committed to the ongoing success of the Show.

It is important to acknowledge and thank the Kiama Show Executive Committee including the Vice Presidents Grace McGlinchey and Janine Williams, always supportive and always finding the time. The Show Treasurer Carolyn Perry and the Show Secretary Emma Howard. This was Em's first Show as a stand-alone secretary. Em held her own through some challenging situations. Seamlessly switching from compliance officer to welcome greeter, gate volunteer to first aid officer and back to secretary again. Em, you did a great job at the Show. Your support and reassurance were critical for me. You have also been delivering wins throughout the year. Instigated some much-needed changes that make being a volunteer on the Committee more achievable. Congratulations.

I would finally like to thank my family for their support, advice and guidance. The 2026 Show was my favourite Show as President. A couple of small changes and the ongoing support of the Committee allowed me the time to spend with family and friends at the Show and really appreciate the hard work and sacrifice throughout the year. We broke with tradition and organised catering externally through in-kind sponsorship, coupled with using existing volunteers and the volunteer database to provide a

We established a great working relationship with Mel Matters, Kiama Councillor and Owner of The Hill Bar and Kitchen from Gerringong. Mel prepared the catering and volunteered in the President's Room, Rodd Pearce provided valuable advice and contributed at the individuals who collectively assisted me throughout the Show.

The 2026 Kiama Show was delivered successfully and demonstrated strong growth, community engagement, and operational capability. The outcomes achieved reflect the commitment of volunteers, exhibitors, sponsors, and committee members, and provide a solid foundation for future planning. The lessons identified through post-event review present clear opportunities to further strengthen the Show's structure, accessibility, and long-term sustainability.