

A sense of belonging

Bulli, Woonona and Bellambi



Exploring the opinions on how three unique areas view their communities and what they believe the strengths and needs are.

This research project is an initiative of the Northern Illawarra Community Connection Inc.
Facilitated by the Wollongong TAFE Community Services Certificate IV 2012 workplace students

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Introduction

The Northern Illawarra Community Connections Inc. (NICCI) - Bulli Community Centre, in conjunction with TAFE NSW Illawarra Institute of Technical and Further Education, Wollongong Campus Community Services Certificate 4 students, conducted a needs analysis of the three local area's Bulli, Woonona and Bellambi.

In the last ten years the local area has expanded considerably and there has not been a consultation of the community over this period. This research is paramount to obtaining an accurate view of the communities' needs for the purpose of developing and implementing appropriate services, support systems and activities for these communities.

The study used a range of tools to engage with the community and record their feedback. This included questionnaires surveys and focus groups.

The information we were interested in acquiring was what the community looks like demographically, what services are available and the provision of those services. We believe in giving the community a voice by finding out what they think is good, lacking or needed in their community.

This report contains each process undertaken by the NICCI - Bulli Community Centre and The Wollongong TAFE students to demonstrate how we successfully conducted this consultation of the community.

This report will show links between the three areas from the emerging trends. It is however, also evident from the data collected that there is still considerable diversity in these areas and in some aspects of the community and their needs.

Aims of the Research Project

The aim of this research project is to investigate the communities' views on the level of services currently available in the Bulli, Woonona, and Bellambi areas. This research seeks to gain a better understanding of the strengths and the needs of the community and their understanding of what could be expanded on.

The NICCI - Bulli Community Centre in conjunction with the Wollongong Community Services Certificate IV TAFE students seeks to engage with the local communities to give them an opportunity to voice their views and opinions via surveys, questionnaires and focus groups.

The feedback gathered from the community members will then be analysed and compiled to form a draft report which will then be used to inform the service on the community needs for future planning for service provision.

Rationale for the Research Project

The purpose of the research project is to provide information to assist the NICCI - Bulli Community Centre to identify needs for future service planning within these communities as well as sharing this information with the Bellambi Neighbourhood Centre for their service planning purposes.

The information gathered from the data aims to contribute to the development of the Bulli, Woonona and Bellambi areas. The research could also be used to highlight issues and recommendations in relation to establishing various activities, programs and services needed in the community.

The reason behind the study was to prompt the stakeholders to reflect on the strengths and needs required in the community. The information was collected from the youth sector, families, the aged, business proprietors, community leaders, and school principals within the three local areas. The intention was to give us an overall awareness of the communities' needs.

Stakeholders

The key stakeholders in the community consultation project are the residents of the Bulli, Woonona, and Bellambi areas, community leaders, local businesses, local schools, Bellambi Neighbourhood Centre as well as the NICCI - Bulli Community Centre and its many groups that utilise the facility daily.

The opinions and views provided by these stakeholders are very valuable in the development and implementation of future service provisions in these local areas.

Research Methodology

Overview

The research process involved the collection of qualitative and quantitative data from the local community members. A variety of methods and techniques were used to gather and analyse the data. These participatory methods were selected in order to explore what the community felt they needed and what they felt was lacking.

The specific data collection methods we used were:

Questionnaires

A set of questions were developed, which were specific to the needs, strengths and services of the community. When developing these questions there were some that

needed to be modify so that they would relate better to the youth, these included questions relating to plans for further education, transport and asking the youth their vision for a sense of well-being and belonging.

The researchers used open questions, closed questions as well as 5 point scale ratings. There was a total of 696 completed surveys. Of these, 41.5% were completed by males and 56.2% by females. 2.3% of the participants did not state their gender.

Survey Monkey (Online survey)

Survey monkey is an electronic tool which was used to reach a wider audience. It enabled the collected data to be cross tabulated. The survey link was sent to networks and to residents who lived in any of the 3 target areas.

Web-based Resources (Australian Bureau of Statistics, Wollongong City Council, etc.)

Research was carried out on the history of the Bulli, Woonona, and Bellambi areas, and also found any council development and planning projects, as well as statistics which thought to be relevant to the project.

Media Release

On Wednesday the 26th of September an article describing the research project, as well as a picture of the researches was published in the Advertiser Newspaper. Flyers and invitations were also created and send out for the focus groups.

Focus Groups

The focus groups comprised of informal discussions with the community members in order to have their views and opinions expressed regarding the communities' needs, strengths and services. We held four different focus groups.

These were:

- Residents and Centre Users Morning Tea
- Local Businesses
- School Principals
- Community Leaders

Reflective Discussions between the Research Team

The research team had many discussions regarding the structure of questionnaires, organising focus groups and other events, how to approach the general public, maintaining confidentiality, etc.

Ethical Considerations

The research team explained to all the participants the nature and purpose of the research project. All participants in the study contributed voluntarily and were treated with respect and dignity. Every effort was made to ensure the participants understood all of the information given to them about the project.

The research team was very aware of the importance of maintaining confidentiality and privacy. No information or data was made available to, or accessed by anyone other than the research team. All written data was collated in a non-identifiable way, kept in its original form, and stored in a safe place.

Quality and Validity in the Research

It was the research team's highest priority to ensure the validity, integrity and reliability of the data.

Information regarding the purpose of the research was given out verbally to every participant prior to them filling out a questionnaire or taking part in a focus group. A disclaimer was also incorporated into the questionnaire on the front and back page.

At the commencement of the focus groups, the research team sought permission from the participants for the use of audio-tapes and transcribing in order to collect the different experiences and opinions being expressed.

To ensure reliability, all audio-tapes and written data was kept in its original form. Analysis of the data was shared across and reviewed by the research team, which contributed to the consistency of the analysis. All information was treated as confidential and only the research team had access to the raw data.

Limitations of the Research

There were some limitations that may have affected the research. One being, the study sample was only representative of some of the population from the Bulli, Woonona and Bellambi areas. The research was not representative of the entire aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community.

Survey monkey was used as another form of collecting and analysing data. For this project survey monkey was not successful in that only 40 responses were received.

Unfortunately the time frame to conduct the entire research process was limited to approximately 10 weeks and subject to student availability.

Demographics

The following graphs indicate a snap shot of the community members that participated in the research study:

- In age
- employment
- areas lived in and
- the number of years lived in the areas.

Age:

■ 12 - 15 years

■ 16 - 20 years

■ 21 - 29 years

■ 30 - 39 years

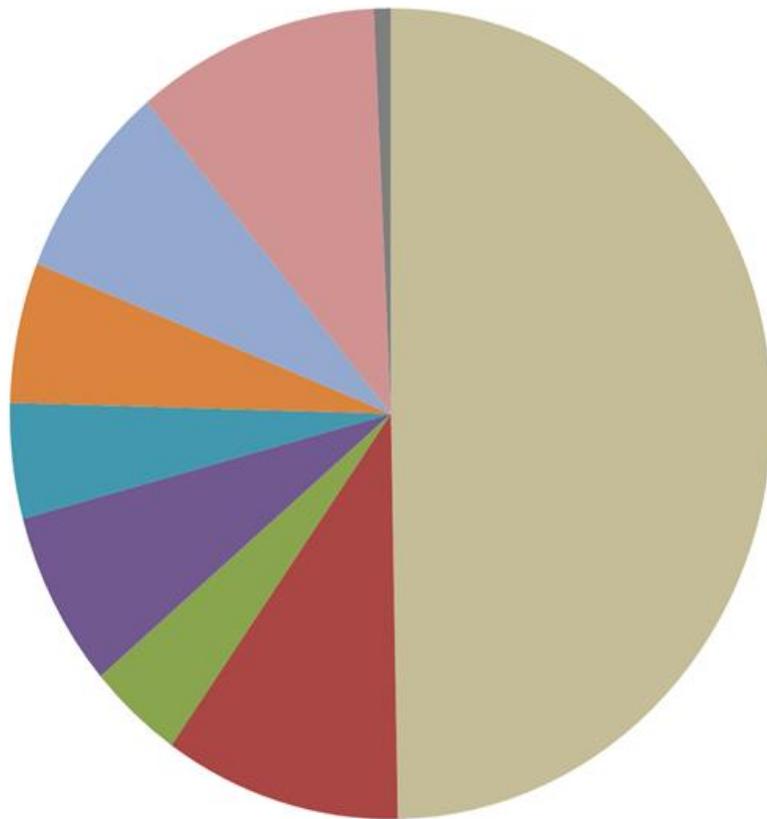
■ 40 - 49 years

■ 50 - 59 years

■ 60 - 69 years

■ 70+ years

■ Unanswered



The age span varied from 12 years to 70 years plus although, up to 50% chose not to give their age.

Employment:

■ Full-Time

■ Part-Time/Casual

■ Retired

■ Home duties

■ Self-employed

■ Unpaid/Volunteer work

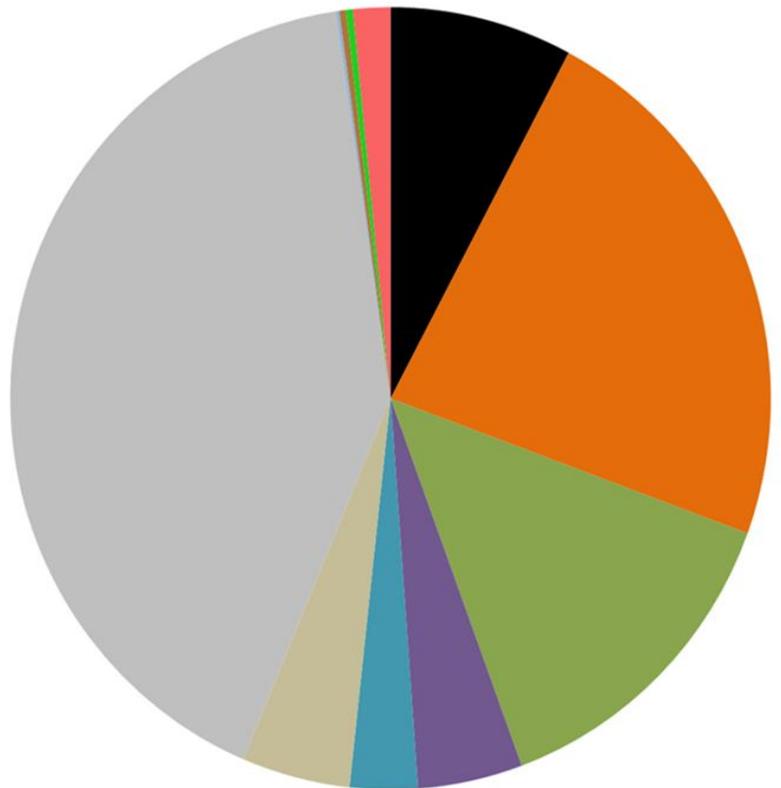
■ Unemployed

■ Full-Time Teacher

■ Part-Time/Casual + Unpaid/Volunteer work

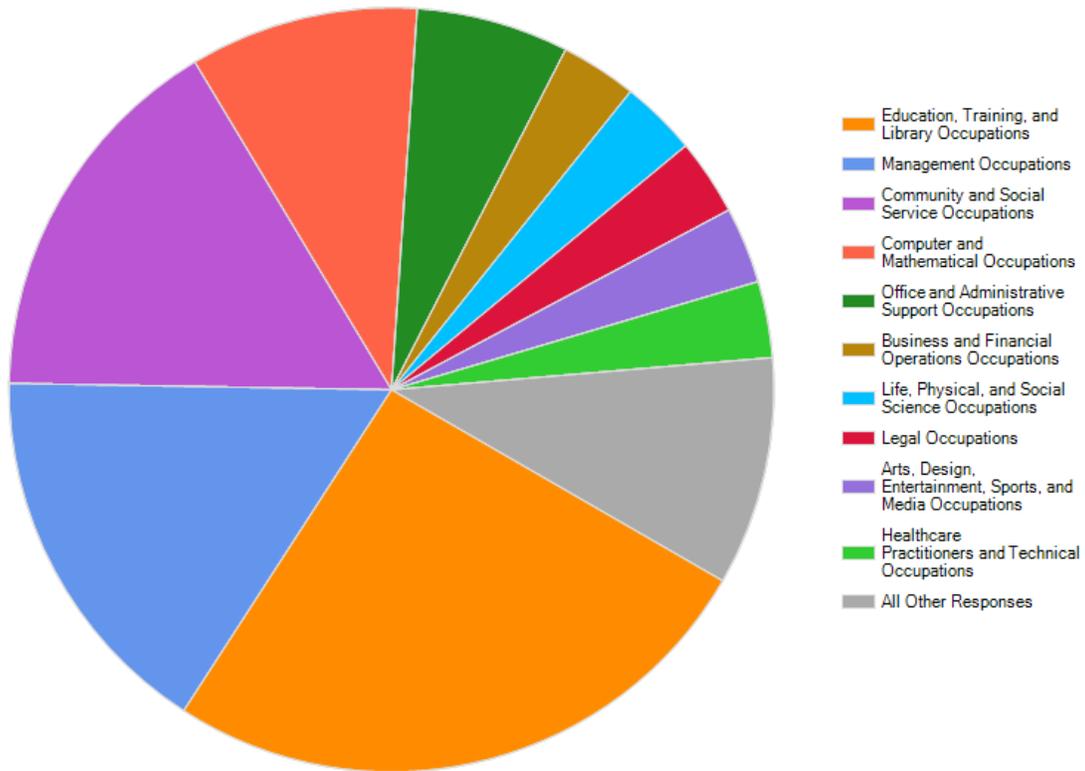
■ Retired + Unpaid/Volunteer work

■ Unanswered



Overall in the 3 areas, the graph indicates that part-time/casual work is dominant. The graph also indicates that there is a larger number of unpaid volunteer work, in comparison to the full-time paid work of those that participated in this study.

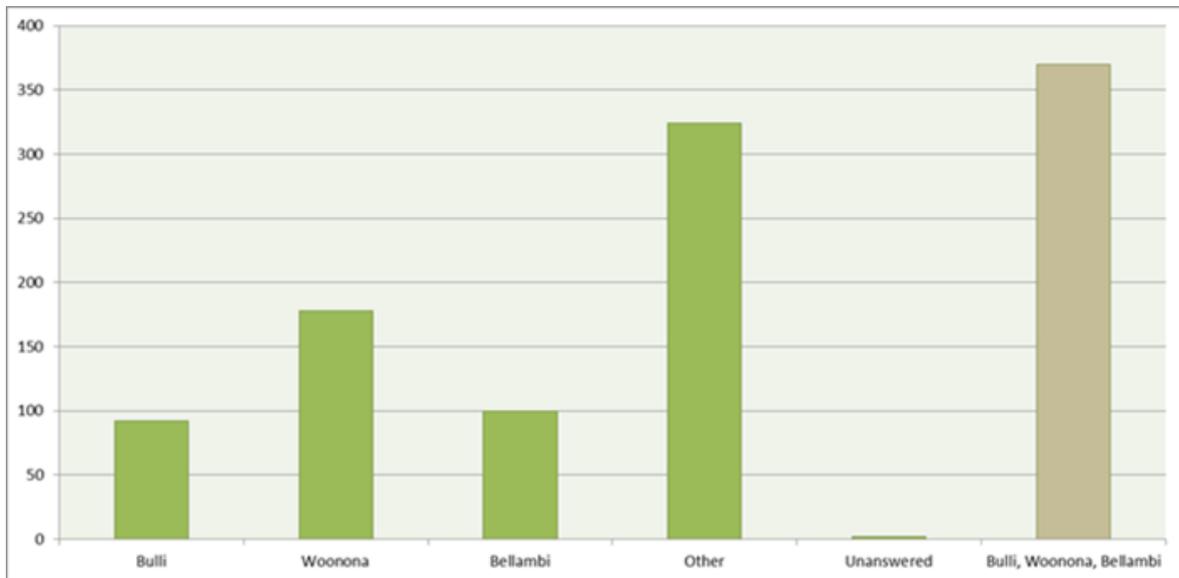
Which of the following best describes your current occupation?



Following on from the above graph, this graph indicates the participant's occupations within the three areas.

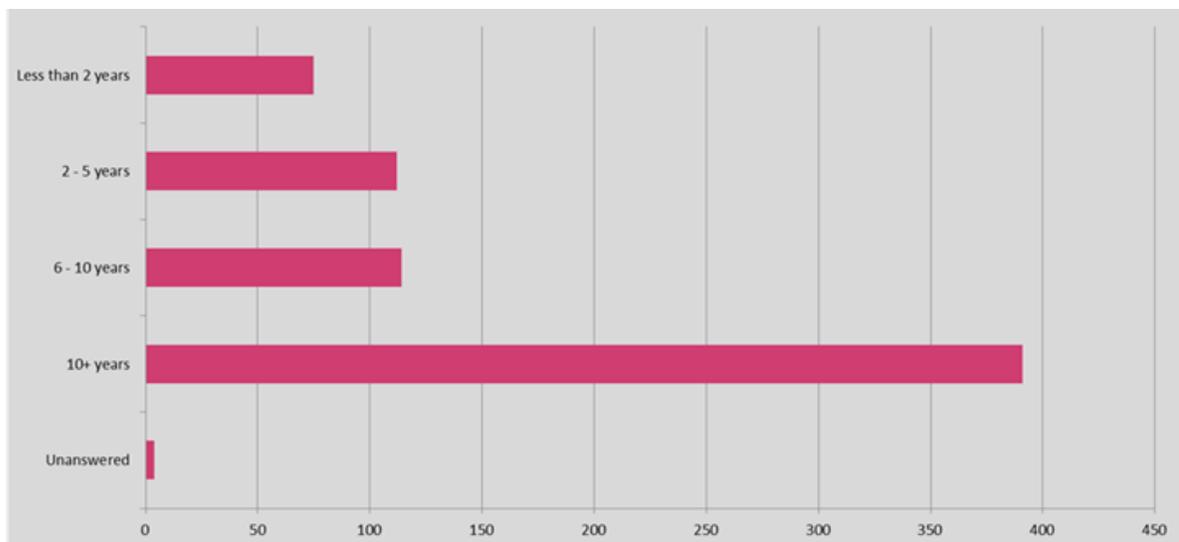
Where the Participants Live:

Targeted areas Bulli, Woonona, Bellambi and out of area:



The graph shows the areas targeted and the number of participants from each area. It also shows other areas close by, which frequent the area regularly to utilise its services/ facilities.

Number of years lived in the areas:



This graph portrays the number of years participants have lived in the 3 target areas overall.

Analysis Findings and Emerging Trends

This section of the report outlines the emerging trends found from all of the data collected. Some aspects of the questionnaire had to be adjusted in regards to the youth, in order for it to better relate to them. There were three questions that were different in the youth's questionnaire; we have recorded the findings of this data at the beginning of this section to highlight the division of the findings.

It became obvious to us, that each of the target areas showed similar trends, but as they are unique communities there were varied responses to some questions. In order to capture the true reflection of each community's feedback, we had to record their responses individually.

This section will demonstrate how we drew attention to the views and opinions that were stated in the participant's voice. . Finally we reflect on the local community's involvement with NICCI - Bulli Community Centre.

Youth: Views on Further Study

It was our aim to address the youth's views on their future, in regards to their education and training.

When asked whether or not the Bulli youth were planning on undertaking further study a majority of participants were adamant, that they would continue further study but were undecided of which institution they would choose to attend. This was reflected by students choosing multiple options that were provided.

The Woonona youth were much more specific in choosing an option for further study. The majority choosing to go to university and those who did not choose university indicated that they would like to take up a trade.

The Bellambi youth were also specific in their choice, however the data showed that a majority of the youth in this area do not wish to continue further study. A small percentage said that they would like to attend TAFE or apply for an apprenticeship. In the study there were only three participants that expressed an interest in going to university.

Accessing Transport

As researches we were interested in discovering the different views the youth and adults had about the public transport facilities currently available in their area and how often they utilised it.

The data reflected that in the Bulli and Woonona areas, the youth utilised public transport weekly and believe that it is sufficient for their needs, however the majority that use it daily believe that it is not sufficient.

Their counterparts in Bellambi rarely use public transport but are satisfied with it. The research also found that the views of the adults in regards to the public transport were that they only accessed it on a monthly basis as private vehicles were their main source of transport.

From survey monkey a majority of participants do believe that the transport facilities are sufficient, however they rarely use them. They think that the trains need to run more frequently and that a free bus would be beneficial.

A Sense of Belonging

The research sought to find out what the youth's vision would be to create well-being and a sense of belonging.

The responses varied with in the three target areas, they ranged from no bullying to peace and harmony and they felt that connecting the community was important. One participant stated:

“Street art and music would be the foundations of my sense of belonging”

The question addressed the sense of belonging but interesting facts that should be noted are that from within the Bulli area some of the youth used this question as an opportunity to identify an issue and offer a solution. For example one participant responded:

“A mad skate park and a nice community, the skate park would stop graffiti in other places because you could do it there instead”

There were also statements made by the youth of Bulli which included:

“Littering... clean environment”

Both Bulli and Woonona had a notable amount of youth primarily in the 12-14 age groups that did not answer the question and instead moved onto other questions. Of the participants that did answer the question they were from the older age groups.

The youth from the Bellambi area interpreted the question as intended and were the majority of respondents out of the three groups. Some examples of their comments include:

“No war, no bullying”

“Peaceful clean without heaps of junk”

“No more crime and more police patrols”

“I would like nicer people and no police”

One other participant's vision was:

"A community that works together"

Strengths in the Community

Overall the data reflects that the three target areas see the people and their connection as an un-doubtable strength. From survey monkey it was a common thought that the community feel and spirit was a strength. Here is how some participants expressed it:

"Community spirit"

"The strengths are the great people"

"Everyone knows each other... a lot of community support"

There is a strong sense that the Bulli residents see the beach as one of the strengths in their community. Another strength which was expressed was the great sense of camaraderie in the rally to save the Bulli hospital emergency department. This is what two members of the community had to say:

"Saving the hospital would be a strength... it's a great draw card to live here"

"Relaxed coastal lifestyle"

Woonona participants felt the beach and the shops were amongst the strengths in their community including the number of restaurants and sporting clubs. They feel that being able to access the shops within walking distance was a definite strength. Two participants stated:

"Fair community... everything is local... you can walk to the shopping strip"

"The sense of community is strong... local sport support"

The findings clearly reflected that Bellambi participants saw the Bellambi Neighbourhood Centre as a strength in their community, and that many people in the community utilise the centre for an array of purposes. A few of the participants voiced their opinions by stating:

"Support from the local Neighbourhood Centre"

"The people... the Neighbourhood Centre"

"Community support e.g. the Neighbourhood Centre and Library"

“Neighbourhood centre... they are there for everyone and everything”

Services and Facilities accessed in the Local Community

Overall in regards to the general services and facilities, just over half from all areas chose satisfied on the five point scale; ranging from very unsatisfied as the first point to very satisfied as the last point. The rest of those participating in the study, were split between unsatisfied and neither satisfied or unsatisfied.

However across the communities there was a continuous mention of the state of the toilet amenities, most felt that they were not cleaned enough and were in need of upgrading.

A majority of the Bulli community was more specific about what they accessed. Restaurants, shops and clubs were the main facilities accessed. The Woonona area indicated that they utilised most of the ten services/facilities listed. Bellambi respondents mostly utilised the neighbourhood centre and the recreational services

Services and Facilities accessed outside the Local Community

Across the three areas it was evident from the data that the majority do access services outside their local areas, but the services accessed varied within each community.

Participants from Bulli mainly accessed medical, variety shops and cinemas outside their area. Woonona mainly accessed shopping centres and cinemas while the majority of Bellambi participants only accessed medical services outside their local area.

The majority of respondents from survey monkey stated that they travel outside of their area to utilise medical services and cinemas.

The answers to this question about services accessed outside the area strongly reflect the community's views on the health care facilities in their area.

Medical Services

The participants were asked if they felt the health care facilities were sufficient in the local area, and if 'no' what was lacking. Overall including respondents from survey monkey the majority of the areas said "no" the facilities are not sufficient for their needs. It was revealed that they felt there was a lack of specialists in the area as they have to travel to have tests or see specialists.

Respondents from Bulli had strong views about up grading the Bulli hospitals' facilities in lure of winning the fight to keep the emergency department open. Some of the respondents said:

"On Sunday there is only Wollongong Medical Centre"

"Improve Bulli Hospital"

One other respondent's opinion on what was lacking was:

"You have to travel a long way for specialist and the cost of the doctor"

Woonona felt that the general medical centre and services were good as they are within walking distance. One participant did express concerns mentioning:

"It is hard to get into a medical centre in the area at short notice and a lot of surgerys are not taking new patients"

A majority of Bellambi residents said that they mostly travelled to Wollongong for a general doctor's visit. Two of the participants stated wanting:

"More doctors" and a "Medicare Office"

Community Membership

We asked the participants if they were members of any community sporting groups, social activities, or clubs as we were interested in finding out what sort of activities brought the community together, if at all.

Ultimately, a large majority of respondents over the three areas do belong to, or are members of a sporting or recreational club.

Although only half of the Bulli Community answered 'yes' to this question, it was revealed that the groups they belong to were of a wider variety and mainly consisted of cultural activities of a creative nature.

What is missing from the Community?

This question revealed that the residents from the three local areas shared very common ideas on what they believed to be missing from their community.

Overall, the residents believed that there was a need for more recreational facilities for the youth; the most recurrent trend being the wish for a skate park.

Another emerging trend was the want for more leisure facilities and shaded BBQ areas. The absence of cinemas and shortage of medical facilities was an additional matter which the residents thought was lacking from their community.

There were also a large number of participants who agreed that there should be more community events and low-cost family activities. The three areas expressed a demand for a variety store. Here is what some of the participants stated:

"Better hospital facilities, bigger shops, and clean streets"

“Gatherings, talking face to face, visiting, writing letters and Sunday arvo BBQs”

“Children’s activities...”

“Cinemas/entertainment”

“More parks, more shade at parks and more car park spaces”

Respondents from survey monkey believed that a larger supermarket or variety store and a community garden is what is missing from the community.

Communication Devices

The research team wanted to discover if there were any differences among the three local areas (Woonona, Bulli, and Bellambi) in regards to their access to communication devices.

The findings showed that the Bellambi residents have access to most of the communication devices listed in the questionnaire.

The majority of the Bulli residents also have access to most of the communication devices listed and the devices which they accessed the least included paid TV/Foxtel and the landline telephone.

In Woonona not everyone has access to a landline telephone or paid TV/Foxtel, however all of the participants from this area have access to a mobile phone and internet.

The Million Dollar Question

The research team decided to ask the ultimate question: ‘If you had one million dollars to spend on your community, what would you do with it?’ The notion behind this was to find out what the participants’ hopes and dreams were for their community.

A large amount of respondents from Bellambi stated that they would like to see a prettier environment within their community. As one participant stated:

“Plant more trees, flowers, etc... beautify Bellambi as much as possible”

They also stated that they would spend the money on facilities for the youth. A common theme that emerged throughout was that they would share it around to create a sense of togetherness.

“Community gardens”

“More facilities for youth”

Woonona residents expressed their wish to spend the million dollars on improving the parks, public facilities, and beautifying the shopping strip, as well as saving youth recreation and the Bulli hospital.

“Build a recreation and youth activity centre...”

“Nice shop... put vibrance into the community... real village, live music, alfresco dining”

Bulli’s high priority was to spend the money on saving, upgrading, and improving the Bulli Hospital. Second to that was upgrading the heritage buildings.

One Bulli resident stated:

“Upgrade current heritage structures and utilise them in the community”

The Bulli Community was also interested in spending the money on more youth facilities. Again, a skate park was a common suggestion as well as a sporting complex.

From survey monkey the million dollar question brought out the passion to save the Bulli hospital emergency department and upgrade the hospitals services. It was also expressed that money would be well spent on community events and public facilities.

NICCI - Bulli Community Centre

In order to improve its services to the community and as a key stakeholder in this research, the NICCI - Bulli Community Centre is interested in finding out if the community is aware of what is on offer at the centre and if the community members access it.

50 per cent of the participants said that they had accessed some of the programs or services at the centre, but indicated that they did not have updated information about what was currently available.

Some suggested that a newsletter of events, services, and programs running at the centre would be ideal. Three participants stated:

“More advertisement needed, mail pamphlets”

“Mostly used when I first had children – support groups etc...”

“Nothing for a while, used to go to meditation...”

The remaining 50 per cent who participated in the study had not accessed the NICCI - Bulli Community Centre and when asked why not; the responses varied from a lack of awareness to a lack of time.

It became evident that some of the residents thought that the centre had been closed down and some were confusing the centre with the old library. This was highlighted throughout what some of the participants had to say:

“Not sure where it is”

“I thought it was closed down”

“I would like to know more about it”

It was also evident from the data, that a large number of youth knew about the programs and services available at the centre, but did not access them. When asked what activities and programs they would be interested in, a very common suggestion was activities of a creative nature.

Overall, the data showed that there was a need for updated information and more promotion on the services and programs run at the NICCI - Bulli Community Centre.

The common response from respondents of survey monkey was that they had utilised yoga and the NILS programme.

Focus Groups

Businesses

From the focus group it was revealed that the strengths of the community were the traditional community shops on either side of the highway, plenty of parking and not a lot of traffic. The community members were extremely proud of the heritage in the area including the coal mining industry.

There were concerns about Woolworths opening and taking business away from the smaller businesses in the area, and that many of the local businesses were closing down and/or moving to Wollongong. Participants also stated that if a clearway was introduced along the Princes highway it would be detrimental to the area.

It was also reflected that more community events for youth and families such a Whoopi in Woonona would be a great way to restore the sense of community.

Participants believed that one million dollars would be well spent on a catch phrase like ‘We love the Gong’, and beautifying the area to boast its image and also to reconnect with the heritage of the area to develop the sense of identity.

Community Leaders

From the community leaders we discovered that the strengths of the community included the diversity of the area, the beaches and the coal mining heritage. It was thought that the community banded together when there was a collective goal such as saving the Bulli hospital emergency department was a strength.

A common theme of what was missing included more programmes or activities to get men involved with such as 'the men's shed' or a community garden. Youth services for training and development, a larger shopping centre and a draw card like 'Whoopi in Woonona'.

Local Residents and Centre Users Morning Tea

This focus group was attended by many of the groups that utilise the NICCI - Bulli Community Centre. They reflected that, although the centre had a warm and inviting feel it was still seen as the council chambers. The demographics of the area have changed over the last decade and some believed that the closeness had diminished and with it that deep sense of security.

It was expressed that new development was needed but without taking away from what is already in place. The hospital was brought up in regards to how the community has come together to lobby for it to be upgraded and to keep the emergency department open.

The participants felt that youth programs and activities as well as community events were missing from the area. They were passionate about bringing the community together and mixing age groups to give the youth and seniors a chance to learn from one another.

School Principals

The principals believed that a great strength was the support from the families, the beaches, the mix of socio economic backgrounds, as well as the location of the schools within walking distance to the beach and train stations.

Throughout the focus group, a common suggestion was more youth assistance programs after 3pm to fill "the void" and also a men's shed.

The principals believed that what was missing from the community was a skate park, public hall and mentors for the youth and employment opportunities. It was expressed that the one million dollars would be best spent on the development of what is missing.

Conclusion

In conclusion the research process of the community consultation has been successfully conducted by the NICCI - Bulli Community Centre and the Wollongong TAFE Certificate 4 Community Services students.

The research team established a list of all the community organisations, schools, businesses, and clubs who would possibly take part in the needs analysis. The research team then continued to contact the participants to arrange suitable times to conduct the focus groups at the centre.

The schools and clubs were also contacted to arrange incentives and a suitable day and time for the research team to visit, and to hand out the questionnaires.

Overall, the research found that the community sector was willing to participate in our questionnaire to voice their opinions. Information from this research project has produced an accurate view of the communities' real needs.

The report analysed the needs of these three communities and reflects on each individual area and captures the strengths and identifies the true connection of these areas. The data received from the questionnaires was collated together outlining the common trends of the services and facilities needed in their community.

The information gathered from this research project looks at what services are currently available and the provision of these services.

Throughout the report there were links between the three areas from the emerging trends. It is also evident from the data collected that there is still diversity in these areas, gaining overall views of the future services needed.

The opinions and views provided by these stakeholders are very valuable in the development and implementation of future service provisions in these local areas.

Recommendations

The information gathered through this research project clearly demonstrated that the NICCI - Bulli Community Centre has a crucial role in this community. Most importantly it has recognised that it has the capacity to contribute to the strengthening of the community.

1. This small study within the Bulli, Woonona and Bellambi areas recognised that there is a real need for education and information about the programs and services currently available at the NICCI - Bulli Community Centre to be presented to the community. It was also identified that any promotional material needs to contain specific details on what is available and must be updated continuously.

The data also indicated an interest in potential groups/activities that could be run at the centre. The community does have a willingness to attend activities at the centre; the data suggested that creative activities would be highly welcomed in the centre.

2. A specific recommendation is a forum or facilitated conversation to be conducted with community group leaders, residents and local businesses, giving them the opportunity to form partnerships and identify what the stakeholders want to happen in this community. The research found that there is an interest among the above stakeholders to come together and build relationships to benefit the community as a whole and ultimately increase social connections and social capital.
3. Throughout the questionnaires and the focus groups participants often referred to togetherness and a sense of belonging as an extremely important component of feeling connected to a community. In this research it was identified that community events encourage the community to come out, which enables the people to bond as a community. A regular community event in the target areas would help to build the relationships in the community and strengthen it as a whole.

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True North, Tales and Reminiscences – Published by Corrimal Chamber of Commerce

Warrawong Social Audit Report - Prepared by TAFE NSW, Illawarra Institute Community Service Diploma Students Wollongong July 2009

Appendix

Researchers Reflection

The following are the experiences of the researchers throughout this research project.

Researchers Voice

Prior to moving into the Bulli area, I was aware of NICCI - Bulli Community Centre and some of the services, as I had utilised some of the services there. In 2012 I commenced a Certificate IV in Community Services TAFE course. During the course we had to undertake work placement. I had been given the opportunity to do mine at NICCI - Bulli Community Centre, which I was happy that it was close to home for me. It was to do a community needs analysis which I wasn't too sure what it involved. We started the project and it was interesting, challenging, exciting at times, complicated but overall rewarding as I had gone beyond what I thought I could do and I have made new friends and deepened the ones with my fellow class colleagues.

I have now gone on and am doing a volunteer job at the centre with the Smith Family and next will be expanding that role and furthering my education at TAFE.

*Belinda Quinn
TAFE Student*

Researchers Voice

From undergoing this project I have gained great insight into the world of community development and the day to day routines of a community centre. It was an eye opener as I have not had any previous experience in this industry. I thoroughly enjoyed engaging with the community but did find balancing the work load of this project with my other obligations challenging. I will be taking many new skills away from my time at the NICCI - Bulli Community Centre and many skills that have developed and matured because of my involvement in the project.

*Samantha Bussenschutt
TAFE Student*

Researchers Voice

I have enjoyed working with my fellow sisters to complete the community needs analysis project for NICCI - Bulli Community Centre.

I have felt inspired and empowered from the different communities in the Northern areas. What joy seeing the families come together at our BBQ function; held at Strachan Park Woonona, uniting different generations together, lifting spirits beyond the clouds.

Watching the smiling faces as Minnie and Mickey made their grand appearance, dancing and greeting the children that had been waiting patiently for their favourite characters. What touched my heart was the giving of the community, the strengths and the forgiving of the past and the beginning of a new future that holds promises to enlighten our next generations.

If only we all had a crystal ball to show our pathway for the future, what a wonderful world we would all live within, and with the closeness I felt from these communities, I had the pleasure to be part of grand foresight of feeling that the strengths rest not only in each of us but also brings forward harmony within the communities.

These communities brought forward the strengths by demonstrating their beliefs, culture and values towards others, protecting and uniting to fight for a better outcome for a healthy community.

The real connection between family and friends allows us all to obtain a healthy awareness of the true benefits for our community, material possessions come second as we all power to achieve a sense of belonging within our society.

*Gail Davlouros
TAFE Student*

Researchers Voice

When I first commenced my student placement here at the NICCI - Bulli Community Centre, I personally, did not have any expectations on what I thought the residents from the Bulli, Woonona or Bellambi areas would want as I was not very familiar with these three communities.

Through all the research, getting out there and engaging with the locals, as well as through the findings gathered from the questionnaires, I learnt that it was a very pleasant and friendly community but was in desperate need of more medical services, facilities for the youth, as well as updated information and more promotion on the programs and services available to the community members.

*Renee Silva
TAFE Student*

History of Bulli

The name Bulli appears to have been first recorded in the Sydney Gazette of 22 April 1815 when it was reported that one of a party searching for lost cedar-getters was at a place called "Bolye", thirty-five miles south of Port Jackson. In 1823 reference was made to a small land holding at "Bull Eye".

Early Residents - Alexander Ross

In July 1868 the board of the Bulli Coal Company donated fifty pounds and land valued at one hundred pounds for the establishment of a public school. The land was on the western side of the road just north of the Company railway.

Alexander Ross, manager of the Bulli Coal Mine, occupied the Chair. After the opening, Bulli Coal Company entertained about two hundred children to tea and buns in the playground and three hundred parents and friends to tea in the tent erected for the occasion. Alexander Ross, Richard White and Samuel Smedley were appointed members of the school board on 1 October 1869.

In the 1880's the Bulli Coal Company Directors granted a sum for the purchase of prizes which were presented on 23 December - break up day - by Alexander Ross. Prior to the presentation the "pupils gave recitations and otherwise entertained an interested audience.

G S Turnbull

The coal mining village of Bulli obtained an official Post Office on 1 October 1869. It was situated near the present corner of the Princes Highway and Hobart Street. Post Master G S Turnbull received and dispatched the mail. Turnbull's salary for running the Post Office was £12 per annum.

Post Master Turnbull erected a new Post Office building in 1879. It consisted of a large room adjoining his general store and let to the Postal Department in conjunction with another three rooms used for the existing Post Office. The Telegraph Office was moved from Bulli Point to these new premises and J H Miller became the Post and Telegraph Master. Turnbull's services to the community were recognized when he presented with an address at Wilson's Assembly Room in 1879.

Early Industry

Bulli, a small coal mining township located at the northern end of the Illawarra district, first came into prominence in 1850 when Captain Westmacott made formal application to open up the Bulli coal field. The powerful Australian Agricultural Company promptly opposed the proposition but the Crown Law Offices refused to admit that the latter company had a monopoly and informed Westmacott that he could proceed with his plans without official interference. However, little seems to have been done insofar as actual mining was concerned, and the scheme was eventually abandoned.

Further delving into the mountain side occurred about 1859 and a company, known as Bellambi and Bulli Coal Company, was formed with a capital of thirty thousand pounds. Operations commenced at the Bulli Mine in 1861 when a tunnel was driven into the seam about four hundred feet above sea level. The workings were connected with the sea-board by a standard gauge tramway. The line was officially opened in 2 June 1863. The first

ship loaded with Bulli coal from the new jetty was the "Ironside". The Ship left with a cargo of seven hundred and fifty tons.

In about August 1878, a second mine known as the "B" Pit, was established on the hillside to the north of the old Bulli workings, near the famous Bulli Pass. The "B" Pit had a very chequered history and after a period of about seven years the mine closed. In 1879 an article in the Town and Country Journal stated that "the Bulli mine is the most important mine in the Illawarra, and its development is proceeding at an astounding rate. The company are working a fine seam of coal, by the inexpensive process of a single adit or tunnel. Not fewer than three hundred and fifty hands are now employed".

On 23 March 1887 the company gained world-wide notoriety in connection with the explosion at Bulli Mine. Eighty one persons were killed. Rescue work was immediately organised and the parties worked with great courage in clearing away debris and fallen ground to gain access to the mine.

Early Transport - Road

One of the first pioneers to cut a track down the mountain slope to the Bulli vicinity was Dr Charles Throsby in 1815. He was travelling with a party of two whites and two aborigines, and was investigating whether the land at the foot of the escarpment was rich in grass and water as he had been told by the aborigines.

Amazing enough, by 1828, the pioneers had found a way to take bullock drays down the mountain. Determined efforts by the pioneers led to gradual improvements in negotiating the steep descent. The original Throsby track, which lay less than a kilometre to the south of today's Bulli Pass road, was used from 1815-1844.

Eventually, in 1867, today's Bulli Pass was built. The Pass was not bitumen surfaced until 1926. Wheeled vehicles began using the road in 1863. Prior to that date, carriages had to take the road built by Deputy Surveyor General Perry in 1852, which led from Mt Keira through Broughton's Pass to Appin. Perry reported at the time that the road down the mountain at Bulli was both difficult and dangerous. The new road down Bulli Pass was shorter and safer than Rixon's Pass, and provided Bulli residents with a greatly improved method of travelling by horse-drawn coach via Appin to Campbelltown to meet the Sydney train.

Rail

The Bulli Coal Company constructed a horse tramway of standard gauge between the incline of Bulli Colliery and a jetty on Bulli Point in 1861. In May 1867 it operated its first steam locomotive, the first in the Illawarra district. Bulli Coal Siding was close to the site of the North Bulli Colliery Crossing where the isolated portion of the Illawarra line, opened in 1887, crossed the old private line of 1867 to Bulli Jetty.

Bulli Station was opened on 21 June 1887. The yard had the usual crossing loops and goods siding arrangement until 1916. During the duplication of 1923 the western platform and brick station building were added. A triangular connection between the two railways was opened on 9 August 1890 (Singleton, 1970).

Bulli Historic Buildings - Bulli Family Hotel

The Bulli Family Hotel opened its doors for business on September 6, 1889. This grand old building is a classic example of the Federation Filigree style of Australian architecture. The Architect was William Kerwood.

George Croft, a wealthy landowner, was the first owner of the hotel. The hotel was very grand for its day. It contained twenty eight bedrooms, an assembly room, a dining room, a billiard room, parlors and a bar. There were electric bells connecting the upper and lower floors, and the water supply, which came from three underground wells, was pumped up into iron tanks for the convenience and comfort of the guests in the apartments.

The first licensee of Croft's Hotel was William Tory Dickson, who leased it from Croft for nine years. Of the many distinguished guests who visited the hotel at that time, the most notable was Sir Henry Parkes. During the period 1901-1910, Henry Stokes held the license of the hotel. The street adjoining the Hotel is called "Stokes Lane".

Today the Bulli Family Hotel, garbed in its heritage colours, still stands proudly on the Princes Highway as a prominent landmark. The charming and distinctive external appearance of the building has changed little in over one hundred years. It is a key townscape element and part of the Bulli streetscape. It has a high level of architectural significance as one of the best examples of this type of Victorian period hotel in Australia.

Denmark Hotel and Stables

This building is located at 202 Princes Highway, Bulli. It is a two storey building with a lookout tower. It is a rendered masonry building with a corrugated metal roof, lace veranda and the rear section is built of timber boards (older). The rear lodging quarters of the original hotel (1877) were retained when the two storey front section was built in 1886. It was previously a stopover hotel in association with the Cobb & Co Coach... It also operated as a tourist hotel in 1896. It is a landmark building, with architectural and townscape value.

Methodist Manse and Church

These buildings are located at 96 Princes Highway, Bulli. The church is small sandstone Victorian Gothic building with a tile roof. The Manse is a single storey brick house with a corrugated metal roof. The church was built 1864/5, and opened on the 7 May 1865.

The church spire was rebuilt to the original design in 1962. The manse forms a valuable element within the Church precinct.

Bulli – Environment

The sequence of sedimentary rocks in the Bulli district is Wianamatta Shale, Hawkesbury Sandstone, Chocolate Shale, Narrabeen Sandstone, Upper Coal Measures. The influence of parent rock and topographic shelter is very apparent on the type of vegetation that grows in different areas of the district.

Vegetation on the Escarpment in the Bulli area consists of mixed heathland, mature eucalyptus forest, remnant rainforest, dry sclerophyll and wet sclerophyll. Species present include *Eucalyptus seeberi*, *Banksia serrata*, *Eucalyptus Sieveriana*, *Banksia ericifolia*, *Cargillia Australis* and the tree-fern, *Alsophila Australis*. Fauna found in the area include the lyrebird, Satin bower-bird, Red-necked pademelon, Red-necked wallaby and Long-nosed Rat Kangaroos.

History of Woonona

A post office was established at "Woonona" in 1859. There are several explanations for the derivation and meaning of Woonona. An aboriginal word meaning 'Place of young wallabies' or "run now"; an aboriginal word for a feature of the nearby escarpment; from the aboriginal word "wunona" meaning "sleep".

Early residents - Henry Strange Fry

Henry Fry was born in Bath, England in 1829. He arrived in Sydney as a free settler in 1854. Fry opened the first general store in Woonona in 1857 and the first Woonona Post Office in October 1859. His store was in a central spot and a tramway ran through his paddock. Henry Fry remained Postmaster until 1 August, when he sold his store and Edward Ramsay Jr was appointed Postmaster.

Ramsay was dismissed because of irregularities in his official accounts and Fry was reappointed Postmaster on 11 August 1881. It was Fry who decided that his adopted home be named Woonona - an aboriginal name for a nearby mountain peak. He married Elizabeth Jones in 1862 and resided in the Woonona-Bulli district until his death in 1907.

Henry Fry was a magistrate of the Bulli Court House from 1873-1898, a life member of the Bulli Cottage Hospital, President of the Woonona School of Arts and Chairman of the Progress Committee and Park Trust of Bulli.

Thomas Hale

The Woonona Mine was opened in 1857 by Thomas Hale, on property owned by Henry Osborne. Hale was the first man in the district to erect a deep water jetty to ship coal at Bellambi Bay. Thomas Hale promoted the superior quality of Illawarra coal far and wide, sending samples to England and having them tested. He also sent coal to China for the first time, and it was not long before Illawarra coal became the preferred import of the overseas markets. Cargoes of coal were sent to California as well.

The Woonona Colliery was closed in 1863 due to financial issues by Thomas Hale and Henry Osborne. Thomas Hale died in 1883.

James Downie

James Downie was born in Falkirk, Scotland in 1835. He married Margaret McCann and came to live at Woonona in 1856. In the same year he commenced business as a blacksmith at Woonona. There were six sons and six daughters from the marriage and all the sons followed the occupation of blacksmith. James Downie died at Bulli in 1908.

Thomas James Ball

Thomas Ball was born in Shewsbury, England in 1852. He migrated to Australia in 1878, first settling in Wollongong. He worked as a miner for several years, then took on road contracting and was a general carrier in the Woonona district. Eventually he became a manufacturer of cordials. Together with his wife Hannah he operated the Steam Cordial Works and was also proprietor of the Royal Hotel at Woonona, which remained his property until his death in 1928. Thomas Ball was a foundation member of the Woonona Bowling Club.

Early industry - Cedar getting

Large amounts of cedar grew underneath the Illawarra Range. This cedar was drawn by bullock teams from the mountain side to the beaches where the cedar logs were winched on to the sailing ships which anchored beyond the breakers. David Charlesworth Snr. was issued with one of the first Cedar Licenses in April 1835.

Coal Mining

In 1857 Thomas Hale of Woonona opened the Bellambi (also called the Woonona) coal mine. The mine was three-quarters of a mile up the mountainside in a seam eight feet thick. A bush track was cut to the mine and the coal ran down the mountainside on a shoot. Horse-drawn drays then loaded it and transported it to Bellambi Harbor. Hale's mine closed in 1863. It was eventually re-opened and the Woonona and South Bulli collieries were connected underground and operated by Bellambi Coal Company.

Woonona Industrial Co-operative Society Limited

The Society was established in 1897 with its head office in Woonona and branches in Scarborough, Coledale, Thirroul, Corrimal, Balgownie, Wollongong and Port Kembla. The head office included shop fronts, extensive warehouse facilities, a cordial factory, tearooms, bakery and stables for the delivery horses.

The Co-op sold fresh bread, cakes, vegetables, clothing, electrical goods, crockery, kitchenware, furniture, haberdashery, linen, garden supplies, chaff, wheat, tools, kerosene, building materials and cement. Orders were collected from homes and delivered by horseback, until the 1940s, and then by motor bike. Large orders were delivered by horse and cart and later by delivery van.

Early transport - Railway & Roads

Woonona crossing signal-box was opened in 1889 to control the crossing on the level of the railway between Model Colliery, Woonona and Bellambi Point Jetty. Although the Model Colliery closed down in 1903, the private line was used by Pendlebury's Brickworks on the Bulli Road. In 1940 Pendlebury's Brickworks abandoned rail transport and the line was closed. The Woonona signal-box was permanently closed and removed in 1941.

Woonona platform was opened on the western side of the single line in 1919 at the Park Street level crossing. A second platform was added opposite in 1923.

Rixon's Pass was completed in 1858. In 1859 it was reported that Charles Throsby Smith ascended Rixon's Pass in a gig with no difficulty and "without having to alight once" (Illawarra Mercury, 2 September 1858; 14 April 1859).

Woonona Historic Buildings - Woonona Post Office

The Post Office building was designed by Walter Liberty Vernon, a government architect. It is a single storey brick building with a corrugated metal roof. Built in 1903 by G E Frazer using local brick, the building was completed on 23 September 1903 and was officially opened on 28 September by the Hon. George Fuller MP.

This building is currently being used as a Pre-School Centre and the current post Office is now located in the eastern side of the Princes Highway.

Woonona Infants School

Built in 1890. Another large classroom was added in 1902. A single storey brick building with a corrugated metal roof in simple Federation style. Block was destroyed by fire and replaced by brick veneer block facing Gray St in 1965.

Another two storey infant's block was completed in 1927 and the original 1884 school was then demolished. Two storey brick building with tiled roof, Inter-War stripped classical style.

Woonona Industrial Co-operative

This is a large two storey rendered brick building with an ornate parapet of molded decoration. The Co-operative Society (est. 1886) began baking bread in 1904 and made as many as 40,000 loaves a week. The Co-operative was headquarters of the Coast Co-operative society which had three thousand members. It is an unusual commercial landmark building of simplified and eclectic Inter-War Spanish mission style.

Woonona School of Arts

The original building was built in 1862 on land purchased by John Sommerville, Thomas Hale, William Sommerville and John Collaery. This building stood until 1935, when the trustees at the time built the present premises, which is a single storey brick and tile building. There was a large hall, a reading room, library, two meeting rooms, a billiard room and a kitchen.

Woonona – Environment

The sequence of sedimentary rocks in this district is Wianamatta Shale, Hawkesbury Sandstone, Chocolate Shale, Narrabeen Sandstone, and Upper Coal Measures. The influence of parent rock and topographic shelter is very apparent on the type of vegetation that grows in different areas of the district.

The Escarpment in this area supports good quality stands of Eucalyptus and rainforest. Unfortunately, extensive clearing and bushfire damage behind and north of South Bulli Colliery as far as Woonona Heights has degraded the area. Wet sclerophyll forest is found on parts of the eastern slopes from Rixon's Pass to Bulli Pass Scenic Reserve.

Pied Currawongs are common birds of the forests of the district. At Woonona, on the edge of the escarpment forests, this species has bred for several years in the same tall eucalypt tree.

History of Bellambi

Moses Brennan received permission to occupy 800 acres in a small tract of land named Bullambee on 23 July 1824. The area was also known as Palamba. The Bellambi Estate was a 2,000 acre grant occupied by Miss Harriett Overington (later Mrs J S Spearing). The land was used in the 1830's by Mrs Spearing's husband as a sheep run. In 1842 the estate was subdivided and the village of Bellambi was laid out with provision being made

for a wharf. The name Bellambi is a corruption of the Aboriginal word Beelambi meaning "no".

Palamba was another name for Bellambi. It was used in "The Paulsgrove Diary". It is not known whether this is due to misspelling or whether the present name of Bellambi is a corruption of "Palamba".

Land Grants

In 1824 Moses Brennan received permission to occupy 800 acres in a small tract of land named Bullambee.

Miss Harriet Overington held a grant of 2000 acres called Bellambi or Palamba. She later married James Stares Spearing who secured two properties of 1000 acres on the slopes of Mount Keira known as Paulsgrove. The Bellambi grant faced a small bay that was used for many years to ship cedar. It later became an important coal shipping centre.

A village was established on Mrs Spearing's grant in 1842 after its subdivision. The port became a rival coal port to Wollongong in the 1860s and a great deal of timber still remained on the property into the 1870s.

Early Residents - Pat Geraghty

Pat Geraghty arrived in the Illawarra area in 1828 at the age of twenty five. He settled in the Bellambi - Bulli district. Pat Geraghty was the first man to bring a wheeled vehicle down the mountain. Pat and his brother Jim spent many years hunting down bushrangers who infested the coast.

Pat Geraghty had fourteen children and one of his daughters became Mrs Michael Cawley of Bellambi.

Cawley Family

The Cawley family came to Australia in 1842 from Ireland. They were originally involved in business in Sydney and later engaged in business at Charcoal Creek (Unanderra). In 1846 John Cawley retired from business and took up land at Bellambi.

His five sons also took up land at Bellambi at the same time. The eldest son Michael married Jane Geraghty and they had five sons and five daughters. When Michael and Jane first lived at Bellambi they had a farm and an orange orchard. The land was eventually subdivided and Michael had to pay the full cost of putting a road through this road was named Keerong Avenue.

After Michael's death the land was divided between his five sons. They retained the land and sold it at various times, most left to establish orchards and farms in the Richmond River area.

John Cawley left 64 acres of land to the Catholic Church; this land left to the Marist Fathers became the site of the Holy Cross College for girls and St. Paul's College for boys.

The Cawley family also donated Cawley Park in Russell Vale to the Wollongong Council in 1939. The Cawley family once owned all of Bellambi.

Early Industry - Coal Mining

In 1857 Thomas Hale opened a mine at Bellambi. In addition to opening the mine Mr. Hale constructed a jetty at Bellambi from which to ship the coal.

The first load of coal from Bellambi was shipped by the cutter 'Trial' which took coal to Sydney to be used by the steamer 'Washington'. "He also arranged for a wooden tramway to be constructed from the mine to the jetty and along the jetty to the loading places." By 1858 Mr. Hale had two cutters, two schooners and a baroque for his coal trade at Bellambi. He started the Illawarra's intercolonial trade with shipments to Adelaide and Launceston. Around 1858 Henry Osborne of 'Marshall Mount' purchased half of Mr Hale's Bellambi property for 7000 pounds.

Later in 1862 the coal mine became insolvent and the mine and leases were sold. The mine then lay undeveloped until the Bellambi Coal Company Ltd. was constituted in 1888. This company had capital of 60 000 pounds to open and develop the Bellambi coal mine.

In 1901 the directors of the company decided to purchase the adjoining South Bulli Colliery. The company developed its own fleet and by 1908 the "Bellambi", a new steamer was built to its own design, it had a capacity of 1600 tons.

"The company commenced the electricity supply to the Bulli Shire on 3rd June, 1913, so in a matter of 25 years the company had not only developed a colliery but had established a power plant..." The company's number 1 shaft was sunk and coal was struck on 12th January 1929. By 1934 the company's locomotive hauled coal to Port Kembla for the first time.

The South Bulli mine is still in operation today and has had a significant influence on the development of Bellambi village and the northern suburbs of Wollongong. "Since a coal mine was first opened, back in the 1850's, Bellambi has bound its destiny tight with the mining industry."

Early Transport - Railways & Roads

When Thomas Hale first opened his coal mine the principle of the self acting incline was adopted to lower the loaded coal skips down the steep hillside to the valley floor where they were unloaded. The coal was then transferred to bullock drays and conveyed to the village at Bellambi Point. It was then loaded into rowing boats for transfer to schooners and other small craft anchored under the lee of Bellambi Point.

Thomas Hale had a low, woodpile jetty constructed into six feet of water at low tide on the western side of Bellambi Point. A sharp nosed punt then replaced the rowing boats.

Mr. Hale then built a tramway from the foot of the incline to the Bulli - Wollongong Road (now Princes Highway) and the line was later extended to the jetty at Bellambi. Work on the line commenced in 1858 and the course of the tramway followed the bush road used by the bullock teams when hauling coal from the mines. When completed the tramway had a total length of two and a quarter miles.

After the colliery was taken over by the Bellambi Coal Company a new gauge railway was built following the course of the old wooden tramway. The first locomotive to run on the line was a small engine built in 1879.

In 1844 a pass up the mountain was discovered by Captain Westmacott. This became known as Westmacott's Pass and later Bulli Pass. It was the main entry to the Illawarra from the north. In 1868 a wheeled vehicle was taken up Bulli Pass.

Bellambi Historic Buildings - Mountain View 14 Jones Place, Bellambi

This house was built in c1887 for the residence of the South Bulli Mine Manager. The condition externally is poor and in need of major restoration. The building is of a rare design and is a significant landmark in the northern Illawarra. The residence is of uncommon style and size in the area and has a strong association with the coal mining industry.

Bellambi Hotel

The Bellambi Hotel originally named the South Bulli and Bellambi Hotel was built in 1889. William Wilson the manager of South Bulli Colliery opened the hotel to cater for the miners and their families. Victorian architects Kenwood and Kerle were engaged to design the 21 room hotel which was opened for a cost of 2000 pounds.

"The Wollongong Argus newspaper described the hotel in great detail stating it had stables, billiard rooms and a fine balcony. The building contractor was Alex McDonald and the interior fittings and furniture were supplied by Wollongong iron monger Walter Vogan." (Northern Leader, 1999, p.17)

The hotel was remodeled in the 1950's and lost its ornate Victorian façade and wrought iron lace work during these renovations. It still has retained its old world charm.

Bellambi Environment - Bellambi Beach

Bellambi beach is part of one beach immediately north of Bellambi Point. There is a large playground and reserve with public toilets. The beach is at the southern end of a two

kilometer stretch of beach and is backed by a reserve with mountain views. There is a boat ramp and small harbor nearby. There is a surf club with a large car park available. Bellambi beach is patrolled during the summer.

Bellambi Lagoon

Bellambi lagoon is located approximately ten kilometers north of Wollongong. This lagoon, forest and dune system has an area of about one square kilometer. Despite being sand mined and encroached upon since white settlement it is still archaeologically and botanically significant. This is a unique natural environment of coastal sand and wetland and their associated vegetation area.

Matters of Interest Relevant to Local Community From the Office of Ryan Park

Proposed Changes to Clearway - Princes Highway Bulli

31 July 2012

Many local residents contacted me in relation to the proposed changes currently being considered by the Roads and Maritime services, to the Princes Highway in Bulli. The proposed changes will mean even less parking for locals and make it nearly impossible for local businesses to survive.

I have met with a number of the local business owners who have expressed their strong opposition to any changes being made to the clearways currently in place.

Everyone knows that small businesses are doing it tough at the moment and parking is already limited in Bulli. What they don't need is further restrictions being put in place that will make it harder for them to make a living and support their local community.

I have written to the Minister for Roads, and the Regional Manager of Roads and Maritime Services regarding this matter.

I will continue to work with the local business operators and residents to fight against these changes being put in place.

10,000 Signatures Received for Bulli Hospital Petition

17 April 2012

10,000 local residents have now signed the petition calling on the O'Farrell Government to urgently upgrade the facilities at Bulli Hospital and the Member for Keira will present it to Parliament on May 1.

This is a significant achievement that has only been possible thanks to the thousands of residents that have been passionate about sending a clear message to the O'Farrell Government by taking the time to sign this petition.

I thank all the local businesses that collected the signatures and the dedicated locals who worked on collecting the completed petitions. This goal was achieved thanks to your passion and dedication.

\$300,000 Improvements to Woonona High

March 2012

As a former teacher, I know how important improvements to learning facilities are in helping to improve the quality of education delivered in our local schools.

That is why I am very pleased to announce that by working with Woonona High School staff and parents we have been able to secure a significant upgrade at Woonona High. Over \$300,000 will be spent in upgrading two science laboratories and a preparation room which will mean better educational facilities for students and enhanced teaching spaces for the staff at the school.

Woonona is a great local school and I am extremely happy that through hard work and dedication from all involved we have been able to significantly improve the facilities available to students attending the school.

Upgrades Secured for Bulli PCYC

February 2012

I have been able to work with local residents to ensure upgrades are carried out on Bulli PCYC. This vital work will cost \$290,000 and I am pleased to have been able to secure this funding.

The PCYC plays a very important role in our community. They provide key services to young people in the northern suburbs of the Illawarra.

A number of local residents, including members from the Thirroul Branch of the Labor Party raised concerns with me about the need for works to be carried out to improve the facility. The Bulli PCYC has been in operation since 1959 and provides a range of services including sports and fitness activities, playgroup and the Traffic Offenders program. To be able to upgrade this facility is a win for the local community.

The \$290,000 upgrade will include:

- A new roof to replace the existing one which contains asbestos
- New gutters and downpipes to improve drainage
- Replacement of the roof in the small basketball court area.

Woonona East Speed Limit Signs

Recently I was contacted by local residents in and around Robertson Road and Liamina Avenue regarding their serious concerns surrounding local road safety.

Residents have been concerned at the lack of speed limit signage, particularly around Woonona East Primary School.

After contacting the Minister for Roads and Ports, Roads and Maritime Services (formally RTA) have agreed to upgrade the signs in the area and this area is now included in the speed monitoring on local roads program.

Wollongong City Council has also been contacted to replace missing signs and upgrade any as appropriate.

I am determined to continue fighting for improvements to our local roads, especially those that surround our local schools.