



# It's Our Place Bellambi

Second Report  
2018



The Australian Social Investment Trust (ASIT) acknowledges the Australian Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples of this nation. We acknowledge the traditional custodians of the lands on which our company is located and where we conduct our business.

We pay our respects to ancestors and Elders, past and present.

ASIT is committed to honouring Australian Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples' unique cultural and spiritual relationships to the land, waters and seas and their rich contribution to society.

# Partnerships

ASIT would like to acknowledge the *It's Our Place Bellambi* members who contributed to making these achievements possible.





***“I have no doubt Bellambi will come to be the best place”***

We have noted in this report, that collecting data across a number of domains has been challenging and in this early stage of collective impact, while we and the community believe we are seeing change, we are cautious and conservative about attributing causation after just three years and the implementation of the first community action plan.

We continue to be honoured to meet and work alongside so many members of the Bellambi community and to watch the emergence and growth of community leaders who are increasingly taking responsibility for leading in key areas of the plan and the community broadly.

Along with other national collective impact initiatives Bellambi and the early achievements were showcased at *ChangeFest 2018* held at Logan Queensland. In mid 2018 we co-developed the Community Action Plan for 2019-2021. We are confident that the community's progress will continue into the coming years with the benefits continuing to flow for the community of Bellambi as well as for the wider society. ***“Now you get on the bus in Bellambi and everyone is talking to the front and the back and side to side. It's a crack up, you get to hear about life.”***

We are very pleased to publish our second Annual Report on the investment in the community of Bellambi by the collective impact partners, led by the It's Our Place backbone team. In 2015 we incubated this approach. In 2015 the *#Ask Illawarra Shoalhaven* event resulted in hundreds of conversations with people across the region, about their aspirations for their community; what kind of community they wanted to live in. We followed with deep engagement with the Bellambi community hearing their **expressions of concern about safety, loneliness and the opportunities they wanted for their children and young people**. We engaged with and co-designed the first community Action Plan with over 800 residents and service providers. This was an ambitious plan with **123 actions** across four themes which the community identified. In 2016 and 2017, 110 actions were completed and a further 13 actions required ongoing activity within the community in 2018. Putting the **community at the centre of this work** has meant that unlike other place-based initiatives, collective impact work in Bellambi spans all age groups and focusses on the issues that are of greatest concern to the community. If this work is to have integrity it must genuinely proceed at the pace of the community. Actions in the Community Action Plan are also focussed on helping the community come together, identify community leaders and build capacity to gradually take more responsibility.



# Table of Contents

## The Theory of Change & Operating Environment

Page 6

Page 7

## Investment Leverage Ratios & Governance

Page 8

Page 9

## Bellambi – An Snapshot

Page 10

## The Community's Action Plan

Page 11

## Data, Measurement and Evaluation

Page 13

## Safety and The Physical Environment

Page 15

## Connections, Support and Inclusive Communities

Page 17

## Learning, Education and Employment

Page 20

## Community Focused Services

Page 27

## Conclusion

Page 29

# The Theory of Change and Social Investment

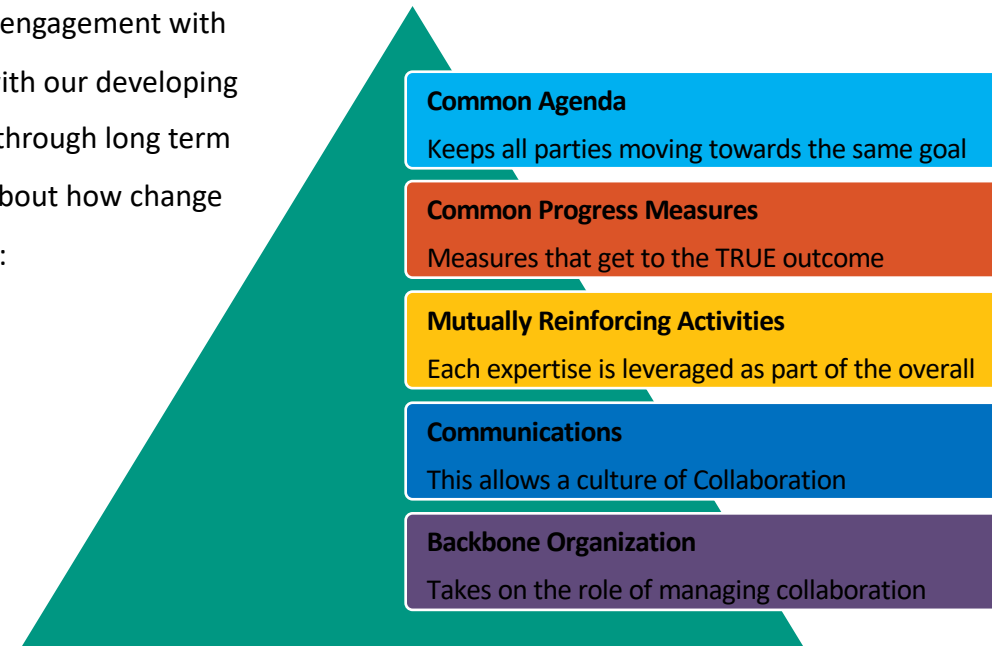
Our Theory of Change is informed by the public knowledge gained from deep engagement with the community, our understanding of the community's aspirations together with our developing understanding of the factors underlying the challenges we are trying to solve through long term work with the Bellambi community. Our Theory of Change is our hypothesis about how change happens. We believe that change is dependent on the following four enablers:

1. The presence of a neutral convenor and catalyst
2. Effective operational capability and governance
3. Engaged community and systems leadership and capacity building
4. Community readiness.

## Our Theory of Change incorporates the principles of Collective Impact

We believe that deep and sustained change leading to positive social and economic impacts for the Bellambi community will occur if we:

- focus on the whole community rather than a single issue or cohort
- attend to community voice and work at the pace of community
- work collaboratively towards the realisation of a shared vision that reflects the community's aspirations
- invest in leadership and increasing community agency
- effect change to systems that act to maintain disadvantage and
- commit to learning together through action.



*The Collective Impact framework as described by John Kania & Mark Kramer.  
Source: Collaboration for Impact*

We expect that the social and economic impacts, benefits for the community and yield on the investments made by collaborative partners will be returned over a 10 to 20 year period. This will require the sustained implementation of our collective impact approach.

The benefits include increased self-reliance and economic and social independence; personal wellbeing of residents and reduced public costs, in particular those associated with policing, child wellbeing, juvenile justice and physical and mental health.

# Our Operating Environment

7



Compete

Co-Exist

Communicate

Co-operate

Co-  
ordinate

Collaborate

Integrate

**Turf**

**Trust**

# Community Development Investment Leverage Ratios p.a.

8

## Leverage Ratio

2015



## Leverage Ratio

2016



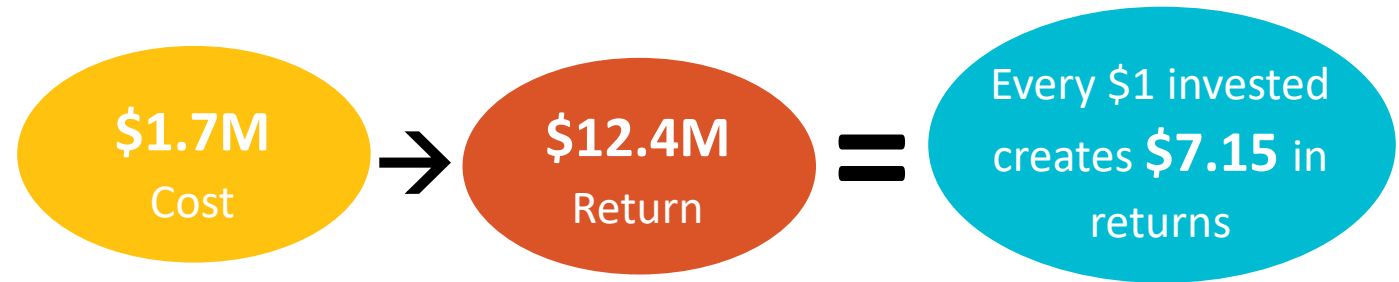
## Leverage Ratio

2017



## Leverage Ratio

2018



# Governance

The It's Our Place Bellambi work is guided and supported by an Advisory Board comprising senior delegates from eight Illawarra Shoalhaven-based agencies which make up the Membership of Illawarra Shoalhaven Social Investments (ISSIT). ISSIT provides the governance for It's Our Place Bellambi. All ISSIT member agencies contribute financial and/or in-kind resources towards the work. In addition where possible, they align their programs and services to support the aspirations of the Bellambi community.

In 2018, the Members were Aboriginal Affairs; Community industry Group; Education; Family and Community Services; Health; Police; University of Wollongong and Wollongong City Council, together with the Australian Social Investment Trust (ASIT) which hosts the initiative, creating the neutral space for community and agencies to work together. During 2018 we identified the important roles of the Bellambi Neighbourhood Centre Board and with Wollongong Northern Districts Aboriginal Corporation Inc. (WNDAC) as connectors and community hubs and we began discussions which resulted in 2019, in both organisations becoming Members.

The Advisory Board met five times in 2018 usually at Wollongong City Council. Council contributes the meeting venue as part of its membership contribution.

The foundational governance supported Phase One of the Bellambi work to the end of 2018. Reflecting a growing capacity within the community, to take leadership roles, the Advisory Board is making changes to the governance arrangements so that we encourage emergent leadership while continuing to support the work.

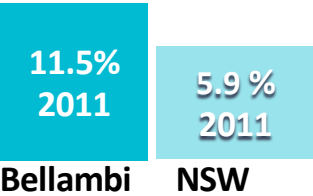
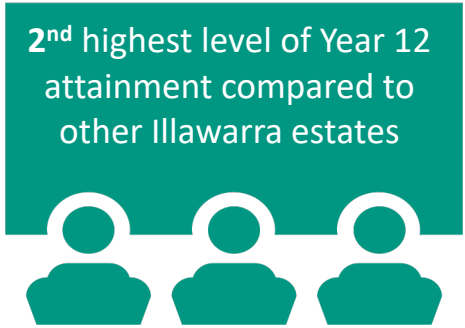
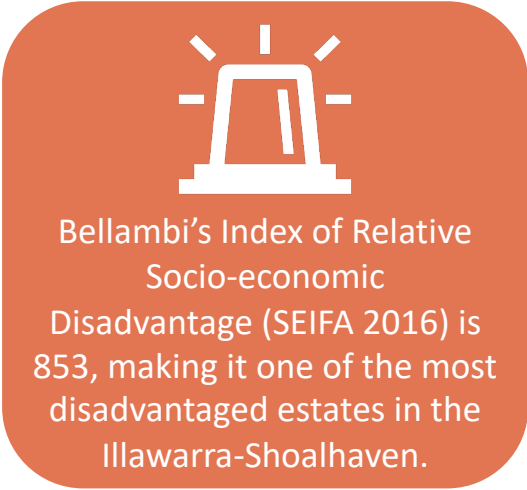
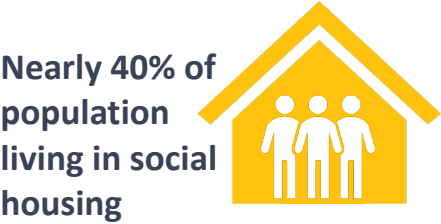




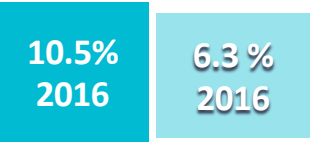
# Bellambi Snapshot: Intergenerational Disadvantage

## Place-based Intergenerational Disadvantage.

Bellambi is located on Aboriginal land of the Dharawal people. It is situated 7km north of the Wollongong CBD, in the Illawarra-Shoalhaven region.



Unemployment in Bellambi is higher than the NSW average.



While the NSW unemployment rate has risen (from 2011 to 2016), unemployment in Bellambi is improving since It's Our Place collective impact initiative commenced From 2011 to 2016 by 1.4% against the NSW state average.



of Bellambi social housing residents do not have a wage as the household's primary source of income (2011)

The median tenure length in social housing for Bellambi is higher than the average in NSW



# The Community's Action Plan

In 2015, an action plan was co-created and guided by engagement with 800 Bellambi community members and representatives from business, schools, non-government organisations and government agencies.

The aim was to give everyone the opportunity to share their views and engage together to develop a Community Action Plan that would work towards achieving their aspirations for the Bellambi community.

A blended model of strengths based, community development approaches was used during this process, ensuring that the genuine community voice was at the core of this plan.

This was the first in a series of action plans that will be co-created with the community to fulfil a minimum 10-year commitment (to at least **2025**) to build a happy, healthy, safe and sustainable environment in Bellambi.

The actions within the plan were identified by the community and categorised under 4 themes:

Safety and The Physical  
Environment

Learning, Education and  
Employment

Connections, Support and  
Inclusive Communities

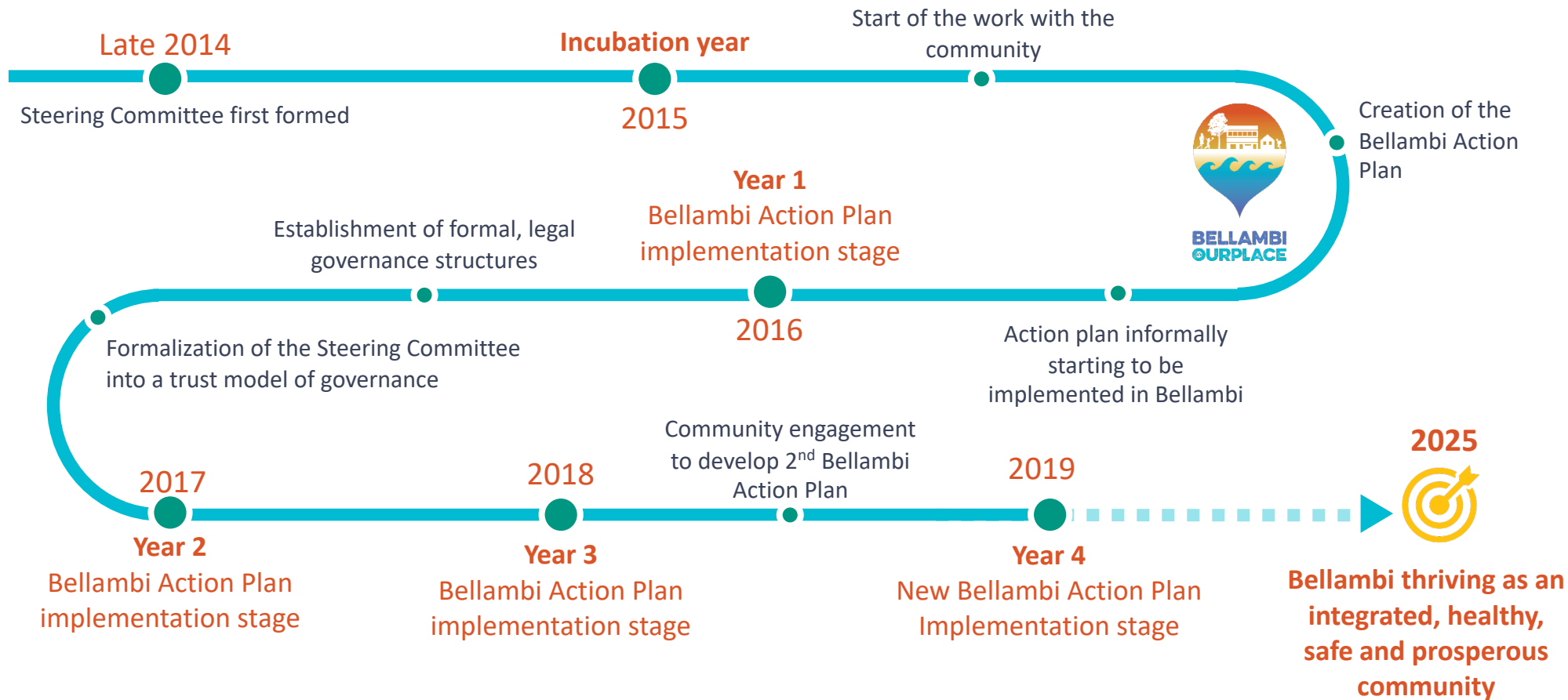
Community Focused  
Services

2018 is the final year of the Phase 1 Action Plan. As of October 2018 we have begun engagement with community to formulate the Phase 2 Action Plan.



# The Community's Action Plan

## It's Our Place Bellambi timeline



We understand the importance of assessing progress based on reported observations and reflections of community members and validated by available quantitative data to:

- measure our progress towards the goals set;
- reassess our strategies when results fall behind the milestones; and
- test our hypothesis that the achievements of the Bellambi community have an impact beyond its four thousand residents and deliver benefits to the wider Illawarra-Shoalhaven region.

This report presents the third year of work of It's Our Place (2018) in Bellambi.

There continue to be some challenges with data. For example, trustworthy and public available data sources such as the Australian Bureau of Statistics and some other government agencies use different reporting periods. Notations have been made where this is the case. For transparency and objectivity, this report follows these premises.

## Base year: 2015

Collective impact work began in Bellambi in 2015. This has been adopted as the baseline year. Where there are no data for 2015, data for the period immediately preceding 2015 have been used.

## Last Year: 2016/2017

The data were based on the most contemporary information available as at 31 July 2017.

## Current Year: 2018

As a rule, the data are the most current as at April 2019. Goals have been set using comparisons with the local government area or nearest NSW state comparator. We will have further discussion with partners about realistic goals for some areas of the work.

# Data, Measurement and Evaluation

The data sources included in this report are:

- Australian Bureau of Statistics (“ABS”)
  - ❑ 2011 Census data for base year
  - ❑ 2016 Census data for current information
- Australian Curriculum Assessment and Reporting Authority (“ACARA”) – Corrimal High School “My School” data
  - ❑ 2015 data for base year
  - ❑ 2016 and 2017 data
  - ❑ 2018 data for current information
- Bureau of Crime Statistics and Research (“BOCSAR”)
  - ❑ 2015 data for base year
  - ❑ 2016 and 2017 data
  - ❑ 2018 data for current information
- Australian Early Development Census (“AEDC”) – Children vulnerable in one or more domains
  - ❑ 2012 and 2015 data for base year
  - ❑ 2018 data for current information.



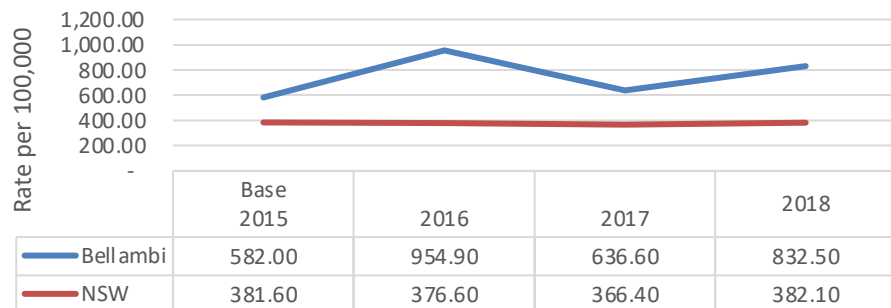


# Safety and The Physical Environment

## Rate of Domestic Assault Incidents<sup>1</sup>

### Bellambi X NSW

2015 to 2018



### How are we doing?

In 2017 a selection of community champions were involved in domestic violence mentor training run by Police and TAFE. The training aimed to raise awareness of reporting and provide mentors with skills to help those in need. After the mentor training in 2017 we saw an increase in domestic violence reporting by the community.

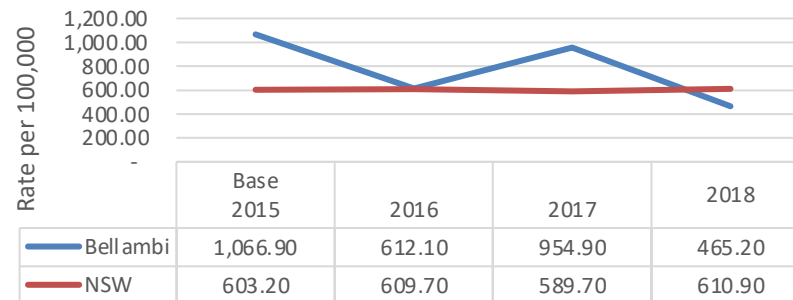
Community has reported there has been less drug paraphernalia littered in the street and that there seems to be fewer incidents of drug related violence. This is supported by the drug offence data.

*“The attitude of people has changed in Bellambi, and they don’t want no more drunk junkies around. Their attitude has changed, they’re more open, because they feel safer without the drugs. With needles and all that, [Bellambi Safety Group] told me that there’s not one needle they’ve picked up”*

## Rate of Drug Offences<sup>1</sup>

### Bellambi X NSW

2015 to 2018



### Why does it matter?

The goal is an overall reduction in reported and actual crime rates by 2025 because they are directly related to community and household safety. Our focus on drug use and domestic violence reflects the community’s concerns.

We believe there are encouraging signs of change in drug crime in Bellambi as indicated by the community’s reports and BOCSAR data showing a downward trend in drug offences. However this data needs to be monitored over a longer period and interrogated further to provide a fuller picture. The DV mentors were active in the community in 2017 and 2018 and in this period reporting of domestic violence has increased.

1. Source: BOCSAR

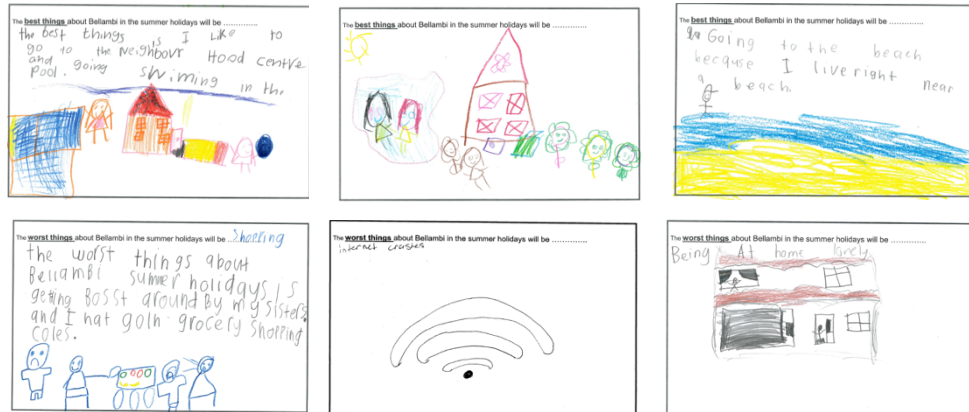
Note: The number of recorded drug possession in NSW incidents reported in years 2010 to 2017 has been revised down due to double counting of some drug possession incidents.

# Safety and The Physical Environment

## 2015



## 2018



### Case Study: Children's Drawings

During the initial engagement in 2015 children who lived in Bellambi were asked to draw pictures to represent the best and the worst things about Bellambi in the summer school holidays. This year we asked schools to repeat the exercise.

In 2015, the drawings supported what we had heard from the community and showed that many of the children were witness to violence and drug use in the community. This year children's concerns appear more normalized. Although there were still some depictions of drug use and violence, the prevalence of this theme was significantly less than during 2015. Children's concerns focused more on running out of battery on devices, having no Wi-Fi and family grocery shopping. Overwhelmingly, the best part of living in Bellambi during the summer holidays during both 2015 and 2018 is the beach.

Local children's shift towards more positive representations of life in Bellambi are in line with the feedback from the wider community and indicates that interventions may be having a very positive impact.

# Connections, Support and Inclusive Communities



*“When I first moved to Bellambi as a single woman, I felt scared. I didn’t know anyone and there was lots of rubbish. Now I feel safe in Bellambi. The community is more inclusive and there’s no more rubbish around the place”*

## Case Study: Bellambi Safety Group

During 2018 the Bellambi Safety Group became much more active in the community. The Bellambi Safety Group consists of community members and representatives from Wollongong City Council, the Bellambi Neighbourhood Centre and It’s Our Place, supported by ASIT. Meeting once a month the Bellambi Safety Group facilitates rubbish removal and the reporting of illegal dumping around Bellambi, resulting in dramatic improvements to the look and feel of public spaces.

The Safety Group is also actively involved in the removal of graffiti and for National Graffiti Removal Day on 21 October the Bellambi Safety Group engaged on their largest graffiti removal project in a day. Over the day, the group painted over the recent graffiti from the Staithes Mews to the beach.

The Bellambi Safety Group is focused on connecting with more members of the community and supporting other initiatives.

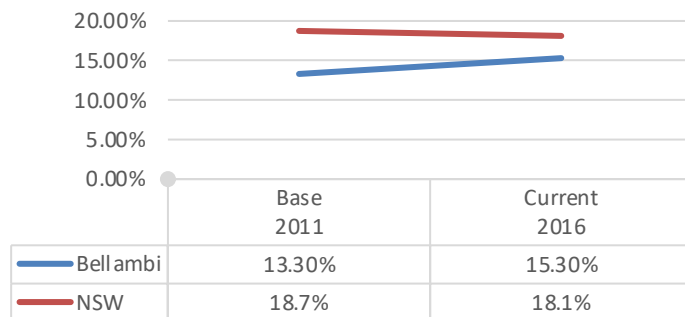




# Connections, Support and Inclusive Communities

## Voluntary work with a group or organisation<sup>1</sup>

(% of residents reporting they volunteer)



### Our Goal 2025

Minimum of **18.1%** of residents reporting they volunteer with a group or Organisation in Bellambi.

## How are we doing?

The Bellambi Neighbourhood Centre continued grow as an important hub for community activities and for community to come together. In 2018 Wollongong Northern Districts Aboriginal Community (WNDAC Inc) became active in Bellambi and held a number of cultural events attracting Aboriginal and South Pacific Islander community participation.

Community participation in important cultural events has grown exponentially with 600 people at the 2016 Reconciliation Walk and estimated 2400 people participating in 2018.

## Why does it matter?

Increased community cohesion and trust positively correlates with reduced social isolation and marginalisation and improved resilience, mental wellbeing and perceptions. The growth in the propensity to volunteer within their community shows a willingness of Bellambi residents to engage with others and a developing sense of community ownership.<sup>2</sup>

Qualitative data collected through community events as well as the increasing independence of the community in organising their own initiatives supports this. The Bellambi Safety Group and the Community Engagement Group are both examples of vibrant and active groups in the community.



1. Source: ABS Census

2. Source: Australian Human Rights Commission. (2017). *Building Social Cohesion in Communities*

# Connections, Support and Inclusive Communities

19

## Case Study: Portraits of You

In 2017, the community identified 12 Bellambi residents as Community Champions due to their continued contribution to the community. In December, 2017 talented graphic artist Gavin Blake painted the portrait of each Community Champion.

In March 2018 we held the *Portraits of You* exhibition, to celebrate these outstanding individuals' contributions to their community. Bellambi residents and their families, local MPs Ryan Park and Paul Scully and local service providers came out to celebrate the Community Champions. Three of the Community Champions; Rhiannon, Nicholas and Donna spoke about their passion for Bellambi and their ongoing commitment to where they live.





# Connections, Support and Inclusive Communities

20

## Case Study: Olive's Cafe

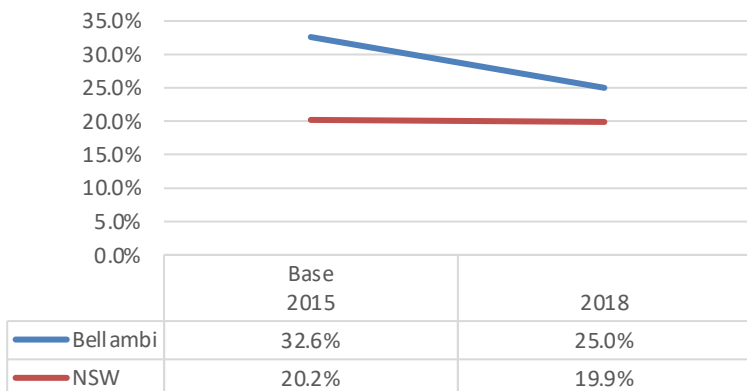
The community's early focus on safety and the environment led to greater safety and cleanliness in the area directly around the Bellambi Surf Life Saving Club and bike path. This also enabled a collaboration between Bellambi Surf Life Saving Club and It's Our Place members from Wollongong City Council and ASIT to facilitate a social enterprise café to open in at the Surf Club which continues to improve connections within and around Bellambi. In August 2018 Olive's celebrated its first year in Bellambi. Olives has become a social hub and meeting place for Bellambi community members and for the wider community. This is helping improve the perception of Bellambi in the wider Wollongong area and fulfils residents' aspiration to have greater pride in their community.



*"What I've seen is that people have embraced the café and really love coming down. They are very proud of Bellambi now, and that they are just coming from everywhere and talking about it and I find that the people that would not usually visit the area, they come and they're very surprised at how beautiful it is. A lot of the people say it's a hidden treasure now. It's good to be involved in the community and build something. And be out there hopefully changing people's lives in some small way or some big way, some people that wouldn't usually come out or do anything, they're quite happy to get out and about."*

# Learning, Education and Employment

% of children developmentally vulnerable on one or more domains<sup>1</sup>



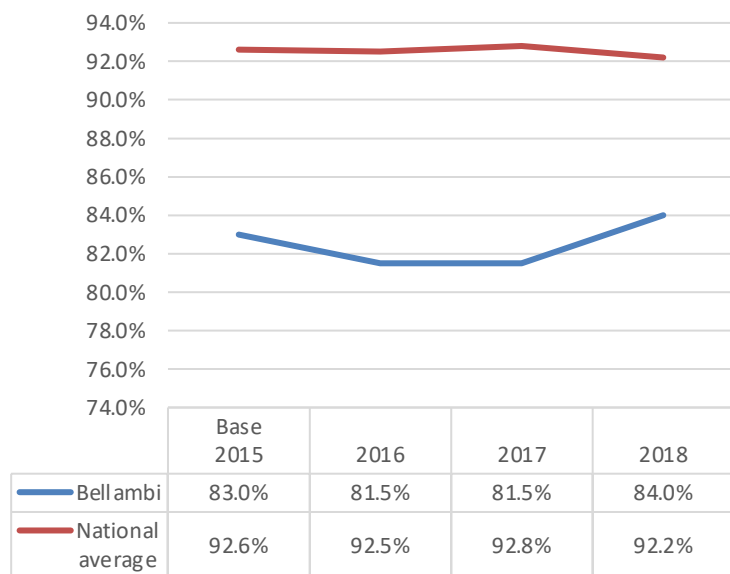
## Our Goal 2025

Percentage of children developmentally vulnerable in Bellambi no higher than the NSW average

## How are we doing?

Overall, the data relating to Bellambi children is showing small changes in the right direction. While the data samples are too small to draw strong inferences, the decrease in childhood vulnerability since 2015 is very encouraging. Although we are cautious about making causal links, it does suggest that something very positive is happening for local children.

High school attendance rate<sup>2</sup>



## Our Goal 2025

Minimum high school attendance rate on par with NSW



1. AEDC Census Data
2. Corrimal High School "My School" data (ACARA)

# Learning, Education and Employment

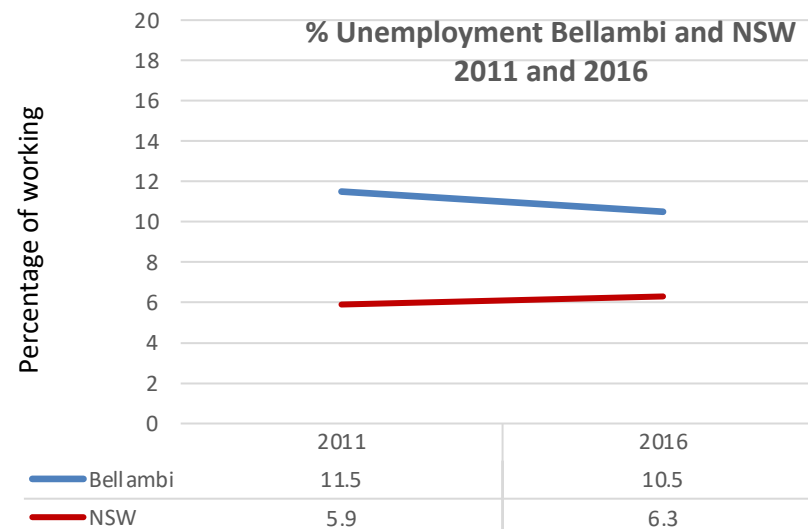
## Why does it matter?

The ongoing commitment to the Bellambi community is expected to further support vulnerable individuals and families and over the long term to increase the employment rate in Bellambi.

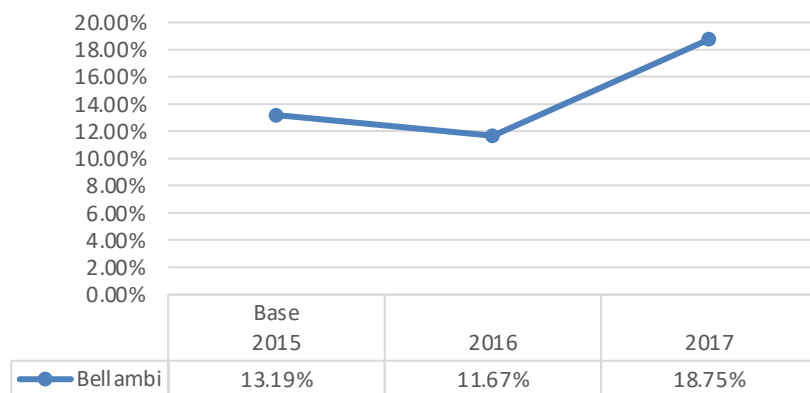
This starts with early learning and continues through children's and young people's education and training, providing pathways for individual success, economic independence and maintenance of health and wellbeing.

### Our Goal 2025

Percentage of the population in the labour force at least on par with NSW

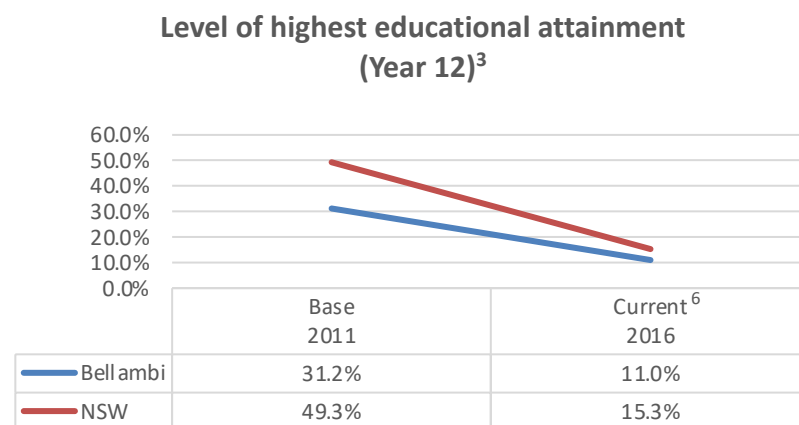


## % of VET Enrolments Completed by Corrimal High School Students<sup>1</sup>



### Our Goal 2025

Level of highest educational attainment (Year 12) on par with NSW



1. Corrimal High School "My School" data (ACARA)
2. ABS Census data
3. ABS counting rule changed to exclude Cert III as ANHSC equivalent in the 2016 Census.



# Learning, Education and Employment

## *Case Study: Bunnings [Update]*

In the course of an early environmental scan to identify the resources and assets in the Bellambi community, we discovered that Bunnings owned land in Bellambi. We approached the national office and engaged directly with the local manager of Bunnings as the company's plans for the site took shape.

Bunnings opened in December 2017 subsequently providing 150 jobs. At commencement, **26 individuals from Bellambi** now have ongoing employment at Bunnings Bellambi and have sustained this employment<sup>1</sup>.

Bunnings is an important and valued partner in our work in Bellambi and has committed to participate in three community projects: the community garden at the Neighbourhood Centre and the improvements at Staithes and Pembroke Mews.

Bunnings also provides ongoing support to the local community through its Community Engagement program. During 2018 Bunnings provided **resources free of charge to 20 events in Bellambi**.

1. Source: Bellambi Bunnings internal data as at October 2018



# Learning, Education and Employment



## *Case Study: Early Learning [Review]*

Quality early learning programs benefit children's physical, social and educational development and help their children's readiness for school. In 2016 a collaboration between agencies enabled 18 Bellambi families to enrol their children in local pre-schools.

We understand that early childhood is an important time in human development. Evidence tells us that successes in a person's life and their health and emotional wellbeing are influenced by their opportunities in early childhood.<sup>1</sup>

We learned that for these arrangements to translate into business as usual requires systems to change in a way that supports it. In 2019/20/21 Education will now lead an initiative to partner with local Early Learning Centres to embed the changes that will mean Bellambi pre-schoolers have ongoing access to early learning.

1. Source: Australian Early Development Census. (2014). *The Importance of Early Childhood Development*



# Learning, Education and Employment

## *Case Study: Rumpus & Bellambi Artist Forum*

### Encouraging social enterprise

This project brief was to test readiness and build the foundational skills for social enterprise, building relationships and working with a small group of residents (max 6) in Bellambi to pursue a social, creative, or vocational goal through skill-sharing, mentoring, resourcing and collaboration.

After spending time in the community getting to know people, places, groups, programs and needs, it became evident that there was a core group of residents interested in, and passionate about pursuing their art practice, learning skills to become a practicing, working artist, and to form a community collaboration designed to showcase Bellambi artists – BAF: Bellambi Artists Forum.

The work carried out as part of this project has resulted in some positive growth, both personally and professionally for the two co-founders of BAF. Alongside this, the community art project of the Bellambi Steps was a fantastic collaboration of residents, and enhanced community cohesion across age groups, as well as instilling a sense of pride amongst residents for their immediate local landscape. Recognising that readiness and capacity to take the next steps need to be evident, Rumpus stands ready to continue mentoring the evolution of the BAF.





# Learning, Education and Employment

## *Case Study: Bellza 9 – 12s*

The Active In-Betweens program has been designed by Healthy Cities based on the successful Horsley Outdoor Krew (HOK) program. This weekly, healthy lifestyle program delivered at the Bellambi Neighbourhood Centre during school terms 3 and 4 in 2018, has become a “must not miss” activity for many 9-12 year olds in Bellambi. While the Bellza program meets the community’s expressed wish for more activities for local children, the program is delivering clear benefits to children in the transition age group.

In Term 4 2018, there were 46 participants, slightly more girls than boys and an average of 19 participating each week.

Through its structured and unstructured activities, the program builds children’s knowledge about healthy lifestyles and encourages positive choices in food and activities. Supported by a committed cross-agency Advisory Group the program is being evaluated by the University of Wollongong and the Illawarra Shoalhaven Local Health District. The evaluation will provide more empirical evidence of the benefits to participants and potentially to the broader community.

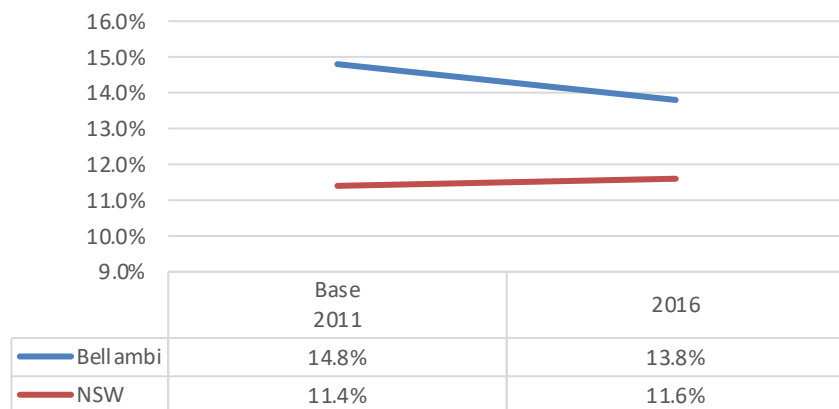


**“I love eating the Food that we make at Bellza 9-12s”**

- Active In-Betweens

# Community Focused Services

Provided Unpaid Assistance to a Person with Disability



## How are we doing?

Building trust and communication between services and community members' access to the services they need, continue to be a focus. Two indicative examples in 2018 were disability support and mental health.

The 2018 NAIDOC Week event highlighted a need for accessible information about services for people with disability and their carers, and particularly about eligibility for NDIS support.

Conversations about mental health have pointed to an emerging community need which will be reflected in the next Community Action Plan.

## Why does it matter?

There is significant evidence of a correlation between improved client outcomes and interagency collaboration, particularly in regards to outcomes for children and families.<sup>2</sup>

By facilitating collaboration between agencies, we are able to ensure that vulnerable families in the community are efficiently serviced to create increased positive outcomes.

It is important to undertake activities that reduce the barriers to collaboration and work to build a more integrated service system.



1. Source: ABS Census
2. Source: McDonald, M. Rosier, K. (2011). Australian Institute for Family Studies Briefing: Interagency Collaboration



# Community Focused Services



## *Case Study: NAIDOC Week Event at Bellambi*

Representatives from community groups and organisations came together to organise the 2018 NAIDOC Week event in Bellambi.

The event resulted in a massive turn out with over **400 people attending** the event which included stalls and activities being run by **34 local** organisations. The NAIDOC celebration included a welcome to country and a traditional smoking ceremony.

This event saw the largest turn out of local service providers in a single location since the *It's Our Place* work began and provided a great opportunity for locals to gather information about services available to them. Feedback from community members showed that this event was particularly useful to help them gather information about navigating new government systems such as the NDIS.



# Conclusion

## An Assessment of Phase 1

The past three years have seen a significant coordinated investment by all agencies in Bellambi and some encouraging early signs of change. Improvements in the physical environment with the removal of graffiti and rubbish are now being maintained by residents themselves. While Bellambi residents say they feel better about their community and attribute this to the It's Our Place work, it is too early to see this narrative reflected strongly in the quantitative data. For this work to have sustainable positive impacts it requires a long term, minimum 10 year commitment. We will track data over time to measure the impact of this work on the lives of residents living in social housing in Bellambi and the benefits that also accrue for the broader community.

Our chief learning from this work is the importance of continually drawing on the public knowledge and holding the community at the centre. This ensures that the work proceeds at the pace of the community.

We genuinely appreciate the contributions of all partners in this work without whom the community would not have experienced improvements to their lives and to the life of their community.



## What's Next?

In late 2018 we met with the community to co-design of the next Community Action Plan. This plan represented a shorter 18 month implementation in preparation for a broader longer 'next phase' for community, including forward infrastructure renewal/investment and deep community engagement, participation and integration activities.

We will be seeking to establish new partnerships with philanthropy and other organisations to extend the reach of projects and programs and to assist in making the work needed for the community to be implemented and sustainable.



## WORK, AND PLAY

# OUR PLACE

## BELLAMBI COMMUNITY ACTION PLAN

COLLECTIVE 2518









**Itsourplace.org.au**  
**Itsourplace@asit.org.au**