

Belmont Sustainable Neighbourhood Action Plan

A Community Action Plan developed by the
Belmont Sustainable Neighbourhood Group with
the support of Lake Macquarie City Council



*Learn about your local area
Get to know local people
Contribute to your neighbourhood*



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Acknowledgements

Prepared by the Belmont Sustainable Neighbourhood Group in consultation with the Belmont community, and with support from Lake Macquarie City Council.

Thank you to the Belmont community for sharing their ideas and to the committed residents and stakeholders that have taken this plan to their peers for inspiration and feedback.

July 2012



*“The future is not
a place we are going,
it is a place we are
creating”*

John Schaar

Background

Lake Macquarie City Council is committed to caring for our community and environment. Council facilitates the Sustainable Neighbourhood Program to support Lake Macquarie communities to develop their own action plan to protect their natural environment, reduce their ecological footprint and increase neighbourhood well being. The program connects individuals and groups in an area and empowers them to work together on projects in their neighbourhood. To date, there are seventeen Sustainable Neighbourhood Groups in Lake Macquarie.

Council spoke with various stakeholders from Belmont about establishing a Sustainable Neighbourhood Group and developing a local action plan. Belmont Public School, Belmont High, Belmont Rotary, the Neighbourhood Centre, and the Chamber of Commerce then helped to coordinate the initial Belmont Sustainable Neighbourhood Community Workshop.

This was the first of a series of community engagement activities conducted in Belmont to seek a broad picture of the values, attitudes, and concerns of Belmont residents and stakeholders. The information collected has formed the basis of this Belmont Sustainable Neighbourhood Action Plan.

During this time, the Belmont Sustainable Neighbourhood Group formed and has been working on some of their identified actions.

- Sept 2010**
 - Introductory Belmont Sustainable Neighbourhood Community Workshop
 - Monthly community meetings commence
 - Belmont neighbourhood survey
- 2011**
 - Belmont Sustainable Neighbourhood Action Planning meeting
 - Ongoing monthly meetings
 - Neighbourhood engagement at Bunnings, Fernleigh Track, St Luke's Fete, Native Plant Giveaway and Living Smart Festival
 - Local project meetings around priority projects
 - Student survey Belmont High School
- 2012**
 - Clean Up Australia Day Event
 - Consultation on Draft Sustainable Neighbourhood Action Plan
 - Community survey on local projects
 - Launch of Belmont Sustainable Neighbourhood Action Plan



Belmont Sustainable Neighbourhood Workshop



Belmont Neighbourhood Survey 2010



Living Smart Festival 2011



Clean Up Australia Day 2012

A Sustainable Belmont

Belmont has a long and rich history and we want to ensure it has a long and rich future. This plan outlines a vision for the future of our neighbourhood. It focuses on what the people of Belmont value, and identifies a depth of skills and assets within our community that can make it happen.

It brings together the project ideas collected from the community into a plan of action. The plan aims to enhance our local sustainability, not only in environmental terms, but by building a happier and more connected resilient community.

This plan will help our community to work together and gather support from stakeholders to take action on things that matter most in our neighbourhood.

About Belmont and its People

Belmont, traditional land of the Awabakal people, is a coastal suburb of Lake Macquarie in the Hunter Region of New South Wales, Australia.

The establishment of Bahtabah Mission in 1825 marked the first European settlement in the area. The growth of timber, mining and fishing industries, and rail and ferry transport links, saw the town grow as a regional centre. Belmont is now home to almost 6,500 residents and over 400 businesses, and is a vital residential, commercial, education, sporting and medical hub utilised by much of Lake Macquarie. Compared to other suburbs in Lake Macquarie, Belmont has a higher than average elderly population, one person/one parent households, and people in rented accommodation.

Belmont is set in an idyllic location, nestled between Lake Macquarie and the South Pacific Ocean. Belmont hosts the largest group of wetlands and one of the most significant coastal environments in the City. The wetlands, extending 15km along the coast and covering an area of 1,730 hectares, includes sites of significant aboriginal legend, important fish breeding sites and many of the City's threatened and endangered flora and fauna species. This area is increasingly being utilised by the community since the extension of the Fernleigh Track through to Belmont in 2011.

The Belmont Sustainable Neighbourhood Group

The Belmont Sustainable Neighbourhood Group is made up of residents and stakeholders who love Belmont and want to work together to see it thrive into the future.

The group meets monthly to plan and work on our projects, review our progress, and to stay on top of local emerging opportunities. By being involved, our members experience opportunities to develop new skills and knowledge, and learn more about their area.

The group warmly invites new people to participate, to share their ideas and skills, and help implement local projects over the coming years.





“Belmont is rich in both natural and built assets”

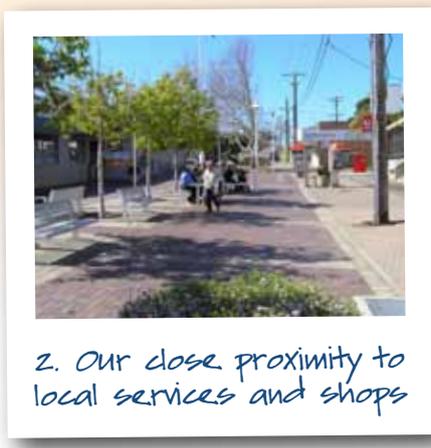
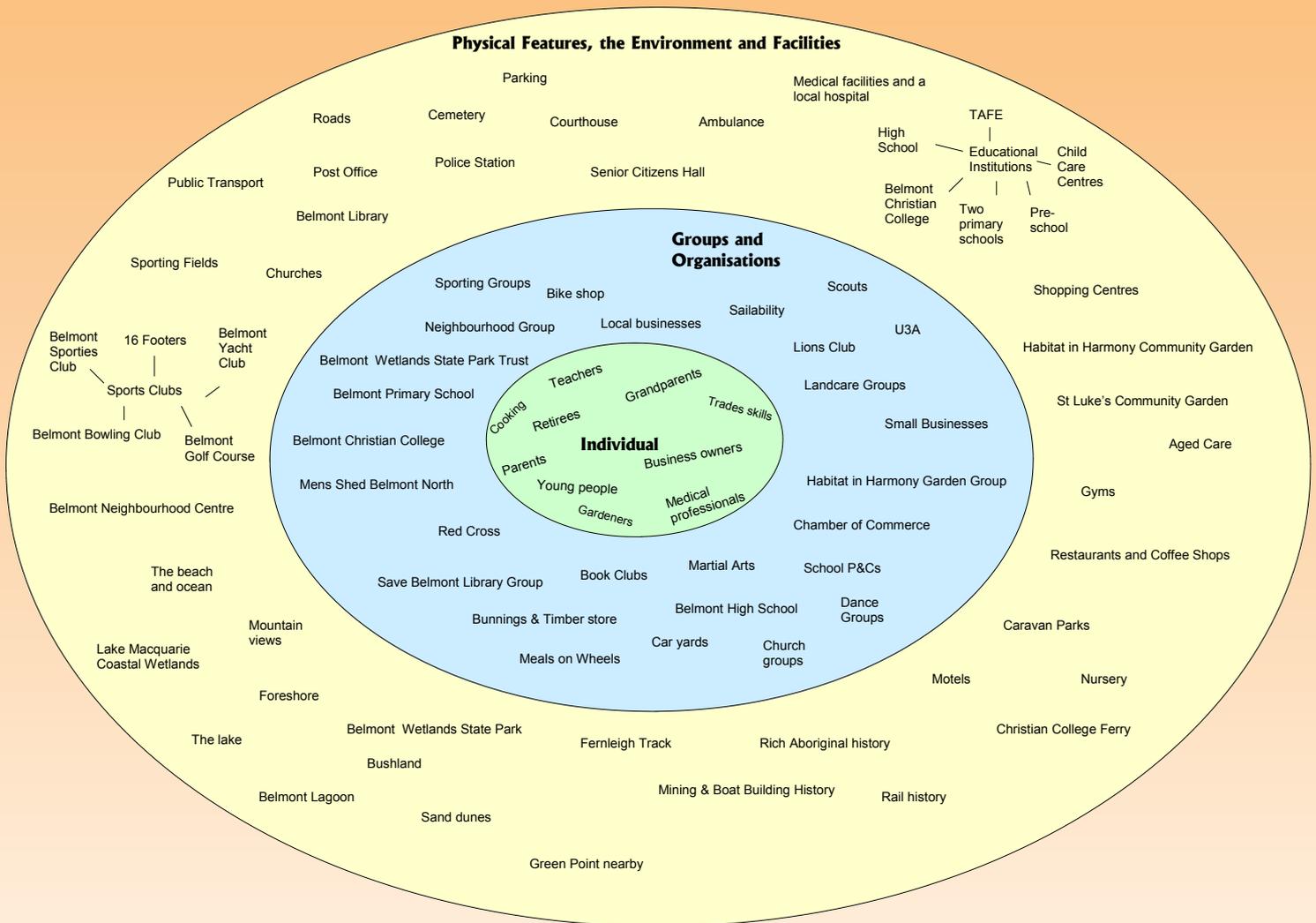


Our Wealth of Local Assets

Belmont is rich in natural, built and community assets. By focusing on what we have and connecting these resources, we can achieve more together than is possible alone. Please contact us to tell us about local assets not listed here.

Belmont Neighbourhood Asset Map

What We Most Value



Our Vision for a Sustainable Belmont

Four key themes emerged from engagement with the people of Belmont

1. Connecting the Community

“We want to retain the neighbourly feel of Belmont and encourage more social opportunities for the community, particularly our youth”



Outdoor fun at Belmont Jetty

2. Keeping Belmont Beautiful

“We want to keep Belmont clean and graffiti free, and encourage pride in our area”



Clean Up Australia Day Belmont South

3. Our Environment

“We want to look after our beautiful natural environment and conserve our resources by living sustainably”



Local threatened fauna Powerful Owl

4. Sustainable Transport

“We want to create safer and more sustainable transport options in Belmont”



Cycling on the Fernleigh Track

These are the community's project ideas for each theme. The orange rows highlight the top ten project ideas prioritised by the Belmont community. Please let us know if you are working on something similar, or wish to get involved.

1. Connecting Our Community

Actions	Outcomes
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Improve community sense of safety and curb anti-social behaviour

1.1 Lobby for more police in Belmont	Reduced incidence of antisocial behaviour in public places through police presence
1.2 Promote youth mentoring by making linkages with local groups such as the Belmont Men's Shed	Positive role models and practical skills established

Support more family friendly events and activities for youth

1.3 Support more family friendly events and activities for youth	Positive skill building and interaction for youth
1.4 Undertake a youth survey or forum	Information on what is important to youth in Belmont. Information on what facilities, activities and services are sought
1.5 Lobby and support initiatives to increase recreation facilities in Belmont eg skate park	More local recreational opportunities for youth
1.6 Organise an outdoor cinema event	Positive experience and interaction for local families

Better utilise local facilities and open spaces

1.7 Support the Belmont Library community group and the widespread use of this facility	Increased patronage of the Belmont Library
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Make connections between Belmont community, business and our schools

1.8 Encourage student participation in local sustainability projects	Hands on sustainability education for youth
1.9 Organise ferry rides to coincide with community events	Positive experience and interaction for local families
1.10 Support and participate in local community and sporting events eg Across the Lake swim, Anzac Day Parade	Increased awareness, support and community involvement in Belmont Sustainable Neighbourhood Group projects



Playground at Belmont Foreshore



Volunteers at St Luke's Community Garden



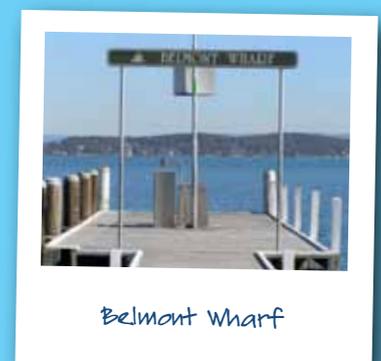
Belmont Sustainable Neighbourhood Workshop



Belmont Backyard Gardening Workshop

2. Keeping Belmont Beautiful

Actions		Outcomes
Reduce litter and waste		
2.1	Hold clean up events to reduce litter and illegal dumping	Cleaner environment, increased community pride and ownership of area
2.2	Lobby for more bins and free doggy bags along the foreshore area	Cleaner foreshore environment
2.3	Run a plastic bag free campaign in the Belmont business centre	Less waste to landfill, less litter
2.4	Host a screening of the 'Bag It', a movie about plastic waste and marine debris	Cleaner environment, increased awareness of marine pollution, less litter
Reduce graffiti		
2.5	Identify graffiti hot spots and promote reporting of graffiti to the Graffiti Hotline	Community partnerships to reduce the incidence of graffiti
Increase civic pride		
2.6	Encourage planting of appropriate native plants along Belmont streets	Increased amenity and native habitat in Belmont streetscape
2.7	Organise a 'look after your street' campaign to improve street amenity	Cleaner environment, increased community pride and ownership of area, stronger neighbourhood links
Shaping the suburb		
2.8	Encourage eco tourism taking in beach, wetlands and lake	Increased awareness, care and financial investment into local environmental assets. Increased local business opportunities
2.9	Provide feedback during Council's local development planning reviews, seeking to ensure mutli-story development does not detract from Belmont's village atmosphere, lake access and views	Increased community input into local planning decisions. Development sensitive to local community values



3. Our Environment

Actions	Outcomes
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Protect and enhance our lake, beaches and waterways

3.1 Lobby Council to enhance the foreshore area to encourage increased community use	Improved access, recreation, natural environment and amenity at Belmont foreshore
3.2 Foster participation in local Landcare groups	Increased level of volunteerism and on-ground outcomes in local environment



Beautiful Lake Macquarie

Increase community awareness and care of the Lake Macquarie Coastal Wetlands

3.3 Reduce illegal dumping along Ocean Park Road, Belmont South	Improved amenity, safety and environmental outcomes
3.4 Rehabilitate and protect degraded coastal and bushland areas eg working bees and planting days	Ecosystem enhancement through expanded areas of native vegetation, community ownership and pride in place, increased community awareness
3.5 Support bike and walking tours of the Fernleigh Track and Belmont Wetlands	Increased awareness and appreciation of local environment
3.6 Encourage the development of educational signage about the wetlands at key points along the Fernleigh Track	Increased awareness of local ecosystems and natural assets



Habitat in Harmony Community Garden

Promote sustainable living in Belmont

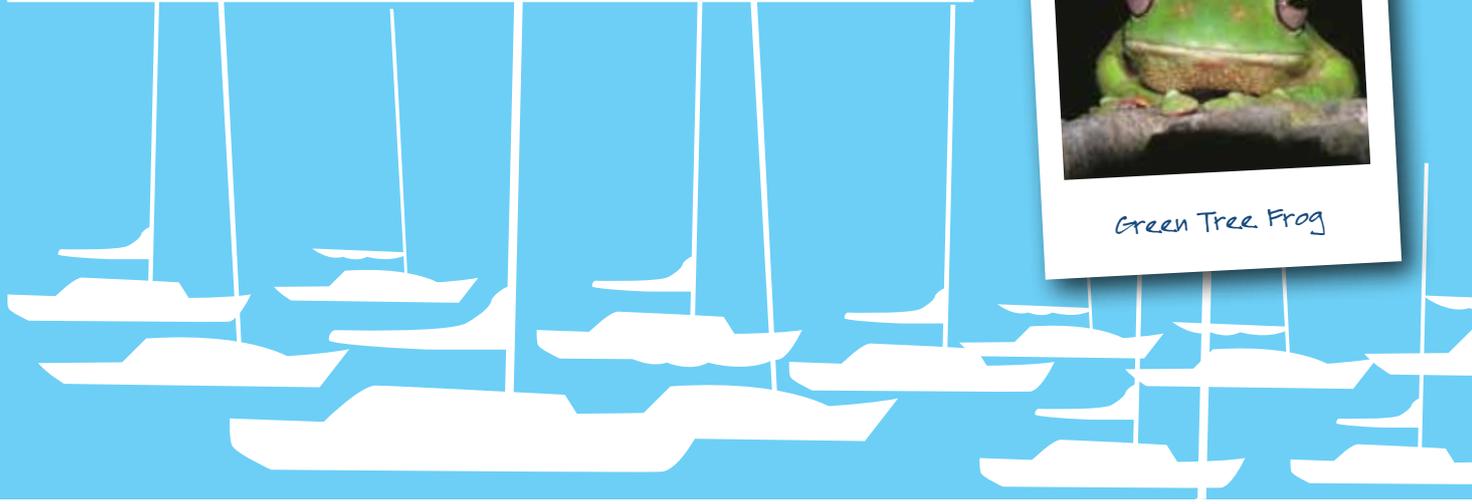
3.7 Promote the local community gardens and opportunities to get involved	Increased participation in local community gardens and home gardening
3.8 Promote home energy and water audits	Reduced consumption of water and energy in Belmont homes
3.9 Host workshops on sustainable living	Increased community awareness, capacity, and adoption of sustainable living practices



Belmont Wetlands State Park



Green Tree Frog



4. Safe and Sustainable Transport

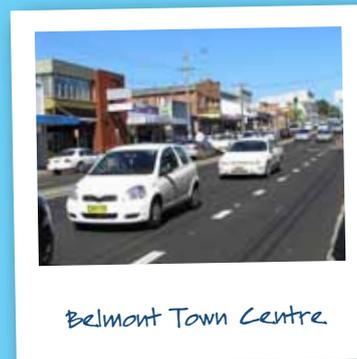
Actions	Outcomes
Improve pedestrian and bike safety in Belmont, particularly around schools	
4.1 Identify problem school crossings and plan for improvements in danger areas	Improved safety for students to/from school
4.2 Encourage a 'walking bus' and 'bike bus' program at local schools	Reduced use of cars, neighbour connections, health benefits
4.3 Lobby to extend the 50km/hr zone along the front of the High School to Wommara Ave	Improved safety for students to/from school

Enhance open space connections around Belmont and to the Fernleigh Track

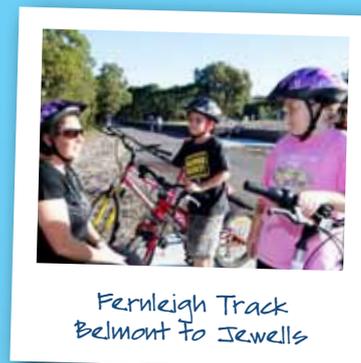
4.4 Map out local cycle routes through Belmont to move locals and visitors safely to key points of interest	Increased safety for riders commuting around and to/from Belmont, reduced dependence on cars
4.5 Work with partners to install a local Belmont information map at the end of the Fernleigh Track	Increased use of Belmont's local services, facilities and natural areas by Fernleigh Track users
4.6 Establish a BBQ and picnic area at the Belmont end of the Fernleigh Track	Increased recreation opportunities for locals and visitors, improved cycling
4.7 Lobby for additional connecting spur tracks between Belmont and the Fernleigh Track (prior to the Track's current end point)	Increased access points to the Track in Belmont resulting in increased use by cyclists and pedestrians

Increase cycling to and around Belmont

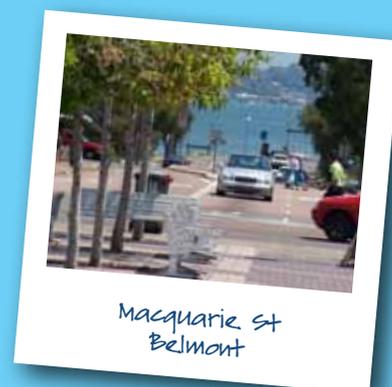
4.8 Identify new areas for bike racks around Belmont	Convenient bike parking and increased bike usage in Belmont
4.9 Restore old bikes for those in need	More affordable access to bikes, increase number of bikes used locally, reduced waste
4.10 Conduct bike safety and maintenance workshops	Increased confidence of Belmont residents and students to maintain and ride their bikes more regularly
4.11 Involvement in Lake Macquarie City Council's Cycling Strategy review	Belmont cycling issues are considered in the City Cycling Strategy



Belmont Town Centre



Fernleigh Track Belmont to Jewells



Macquarie St Belmont



Fernleigh Track Belmont Station

Get involved!

You can get involved in the Belmont Sustainable Neighbourhood Group in a variety of ways.



Monthly meetings

The Belmont Sustainable Neighbourhood Group meets the second Wednesday of each month. At these informal meetings members work together to plan local projects and discuss local emerging issues and opportunities in the area. Contact us for details of our next meeting.

Local projects

Are you passionate about a particular issue or area of Belmont? Lend a hand on the projects important to you.

Join the email list

Stay in touch with what is happening by joining the local email network.

Sharing skills and hobbies

Share your passion or talent for a good cause. Do you walk regularly, run a local business, or are you good with words or desktop publishing? Let us know. We always welcome volunteers willing to help with components of our local projects.

Are you an ideas person?

Show your support for the group and their vision by sending a message or sharing your own ideas for Belmont.

