

Valentine Sustainable Neighbourhood Action Plan

A vision for Valentine

*"To maintain our village atmosphere,
protect our natural environment
and create a safe, vibrant, active community"*



VALENTINE
SUSTAINABLE NEIGHBOURHOOD

The Sustainable Neighbourhoods Program

Reducing our ecological footprint neighbourhood by neighbourhood

Lake Macquarie City Council is committed to caring for the local environment and contributing to the creation of a sustainable city, and planet. The Sustainable Neighbourhoods Program supports residents to develop their own Sustainable Neighbourhood Action Plan (SNAP), to implement actions that reduce their neighbourhood footprint, and increase their neighbourhood wellbeing. You can find out more about the program at www.lakemac.com.au.

Lake Macquarie Sustainable Neighbourhood Alliance

The Alliance is an incorporated community group, that provides support for local Sustainable Neighbourhood Groups across the City of Lake Macquarie. You can find out more about the Alliance, available resources and how you can get involved in the Sustainable Neighbourhoods network at www.sustainableneighbourhoods.org.au.

The Valentine Sustainable Neighbourhood Group (SNG)

The Valentine SNG is made up of community members who live, work and play in the Valentine area. We love where we live and are passionate about protecting our environment and strengthening our 'village' community. This plan outlines a range of projects and actions that we aim to work together to achieve, to begin the journey to a more sustainable future for our children and our community.

The Valentine Sustainable Neighbourhood Action Plan: Methodology

In April 2010, Council met with a group of residents from the Valentine area to discuss the feasibility of developing a Sustainable Neighbourhood Group in Valentine. These conversations led to the establishment of the Valentine Sustainable Neighbourhood Group.

The contents of the Valentine (SNAP) have been developed through a series of community engagement activities designed to ensure broad participation, representing an accurate and authentic picture of the values, attitudes and concerns of residents. Over a period of 12 months, the Valentine Sustainable Neighbourhood Group worked with neighbours and Council to collect information about what is important to the residents of Valentine. These engagement activities included:

- Valentine Sustainable Neighbourhood Introductory Community Workshop (September 2010)
- Monthly Valentine Sustainable Neighbourhood meetings (from October 2010)
- Valentine Community Attitudes Survey (November 2010)
- Valentine Sustainable Neighbourhood Action Planning Workshop (May 2011)
- Draft Valentine Sustainable Neighbourhood Action Plan open for community consultation and input (September 2011)

The information collected through these engagements has formed the basis of the Valentine SNAP.



Valentine Sustainable Neighbourhood

What we love about Valentine



Our sense of community and village atmosphere



The natural beauty, our bushland, wildlife, lake and open spaces



Proximity to the Lake and Green Point Foreshore Reserve



Local shopping centre and facilities



Peace and quiet

Acknowledgment of Country

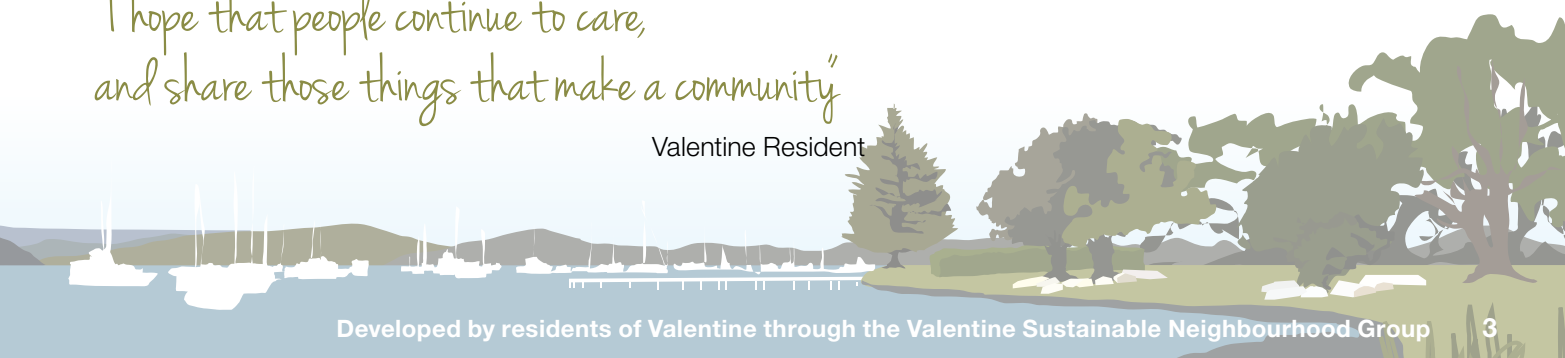
We acknowledge the Awabakal people, the traditional custodians of our neighbourhood.

We pay our respects to their elders - past, present, and future - for they hold the memories, traditions, culture, and hopes for this land, and for Aboriginal Australia.

As we come together as a community, to plan for the future and wellbeing of our neighbourhood, we remember, that under our roads, homes, sports grounds, and shops is, was and always will be the traditional land of the Awabakal people.

"I hope that people continue to care,
and share those things that make a community"

Valentine Resident



Valentine – Our neighbourhood

CROUDACE BAY

HARTLEY
POINT

GREEN
POINT

Natural and Cultural Features

1. Green Point Foreshore Reserve
2. Littoral rainforest
3. Aboriginal midden
4. Seagrass meadows
5. Bennett Park
6. Allambee Park Bushland Reserve
7. Shepherds Creek
8. Boat jetty

Community assets

9. Valentine Heated Pool
10. Valentine Bowling Club
11. Valentine shopping precinct
12. Valentine Public School

A vision for Valentine

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'Creating a village'

We are connected, engaged, and empowered to work together to improve our community and wellbeing. Valentine shopping area is a thriving social and commercial area. There is strong local pride in the area and involvement in local activities.



Protecting the natural environment

We care about the natural and cultural values of our neighbourhood and understand the threats and risks affecting the health of our environment. We take action to protect, repair, and maintain the health of our Lake, creeks, and bushland.



Living sustainably

We take personal action to make our own households more sustainable, to reduce energy and water use, waste and consumption. We repair, share, and reuse goods, skills, and resources. We are regularly involved in actions to reduce our ecological footprint.



'Creating a village' Strengthening our community

Actions		Outcomes
1.1	Conduct regular Sustainable Neighbourhood group meetings	Residents develop a strong, representative neighbourhood voice. Local neighbourhood projects are developed and supported. The community is empowered to express their views and participate in planning and decision-making.
1.2	Revitalise Valentine shopping area (a) Lobby Council to improve the streetscape at the Valentine shopping area, working together with shop and business owners and Council. e.g. seating, planter boxes, footpath repairs, beautifying shop fronts, character garbage and recycle bins. (b) Lobby Council to improve crossings and parking, and more disabled parking spot closer to shops. (c) Lobby Council for upgraded or new toilet facilities. (d) Build relationships with business and shop owners.	Valentine shopping area is a thriving business centre. Local business and trades people are retained and supported by their community. Residents travel less to shop and source goods and services. The neighbourhood footprint is reduced, through reduction of car use. Community connections are strengthened. There are clean public toilet facilities near the shops and Allambee Park.
1.3	Community events (a) Work to develop and run community events and activities. (b) Investigate potential funding and grant sources, including Council Community, Cultural and Sporting Assistance Program. E.g. open mic sessions in Allambee Park for local singers, musicians etc, community clean-ups, a bushwalking group, spotlight walks in Green Point Foreshore Reserve.	There are strong social links between residents, people know their neighbours and can rely on them for friendship and support. There is a strengthened sense of pride and connection to Valentine. Valentine is a vibrant, active community with strong community networks.
1.4	Community facility Re-establish a Community Hall.	The community has a much needed meeting place readily available and convenient to all residents. There is a space available in the community to support a range of events and activities and provide a meeting place for groups active in the community. There is a shared space that acts as a focal point for the community, and helps build a strong sense of place and connectivity amongst residents.
1.5	Trades and business directory Develop a neighbourhood directory to promote local business and trades people.	Local business and trades people are supported by their own community. Residents travel less to shop and source goods and services. Community connections are strengthened.
1.6	Improve neighbourhood communications (a) Investigate potential locations and funding sources for a community notice board. (b) Advertise and promote community activities through school newsletters and local networks.	There are avenues for the local community to promote local events and activities. Residents are able stay in touch, be informed, and find ways to meet people with similar interests and ideas. Residents are encouraged to participate in local activities and become involved in their community. There are avenues to provide residents with locally relevant information on various issues, including environmental and sustainable living activities and issues.

Actions		Outcomes
1.7	Improvements for Allambee Park Lobby Council to improve lighting in the park.	Allambee Park is safe, well utilised and well looked after. Allambee Park can be safely used in the evening. Crime and graffiti in the area are reduced.
1.8	Men's Shed Investigate the potential of establishing a Men's Shed in Valentine.	There is a centre for men to meet, to develop construction and building projects and create a social network around common interests and skills. There is a space for men to share skills, resources and knowledge and create projects that can support and contribute to their community. There is an venue to build relationships and support intergenerational learning between older and younger men. There is a venue for men to build relationships, be supported and build a sense of well being.
1.9	Involving our young people (a) Support young people to have a voice in the neighbourhood and develop ideas and projects. (b) Find ways to engage with students through Valentine Public School, Warners Bay and Belmont High Schools. E.g. Open mic sessions in Allambee Park for local singers, musicians etc. (c) Consider options for engaging young people in managing graffiti, e.g. creating a space for spray art in the community. (d) Find ways to start conversations with young people, build relationships and opportunities for young people to develop projects they are interested in and able to take ownership of.	Young people are involved and engaged in their community. Young people have a voice in their community and feel recognised and supported. There is respect and understanding between generations in the community.
1.10	Valentine signage project (a) Develop a project to record local history and create signage and landmarks to recognise historical, cultural and environmental landmarks in the suburb. Research project through Council libraries, Bahtabah Aboriginal Land Council, and with locals who have a long history in and knowledge of the area. Develop a proposal and liaise with Council for advice and support. (b) Work with Council to create wayfinding signage, e.g. 'Welcome to Valentine', pointers to shops, Green Point Foreshore Reserve, bicycle paths.	There is informative, educational signage in significant areas in the neighbourhood increasing awareness of local values and generating a sense of local pride. Residents appreciate, understand and care about their natural and cultural environment. Valentine is easy to navigate by bicycle and foot. The energy footprint of Valentine is reduced as fewer cars are used for local transport.
1.11	Build relationships with the local indigenous community (a) Find ways to improve understanding of local indigenous history and culture. (b) Engage with Bahtabah Aboriginal Land Council to identify ways in which Aboriginal culture can be incorporated into the neighbourhood and Valentine Sustainable Neighbourhood Group (VSNG) activities.	There is increased understanding and appreciation of indigenous culture and social history. There are improved relationships with the indigenous community.

Actions		Outcomes
2.1	Improve transport in and around Valentine (a) Work with residents and Council to identify walking and cycleways into, around and out of the suburb. (b) Contribute to Council citywide Cycleways Strategy, and look at ways to link Warners Bay and Belmont through Valentine. (c) Work with Council to develop actions to improve access to and safety around Valentine Public School, e.g. flashing 40km zone lights, signage and reduced speed limits on Croudace Bay Rd.	There is decreased use of cars as residents are able to walk and ride their bikes safely into and around the neighbourhood. Children are able to safely ride and walk to school, with additional social and health benefits. There is increased awareness of school zones and improved safety for residents and children. Elderly people and parents with prams can safely travel on foot through the suburb. The ecological footprint of the neighbourhood is reduced.
2.2	Weekend markets in the park (a) Investigate the potential for starting a weekend market in Allambee Park, focusing on fresh locally made and grown produce, second hand goods, environmental and sustainability information. Potentially include a swap meet to re-use unwanted items. (b) Liaise with Council for advice on planning and operational procedures.	There is access to fresh locally produced fruit, vegetables, and produce. Local growers and producers are supported. There is an opportunity for neighbours to come together in a relaxed, friendly environment. There is a venue for the VSNG to promote sustainability issues, and topics to the community.
2.3	Reduce energy usage and water use (a) Develop a program of home energy, waste and water use audits. (b) Promote GreenPower. (c) Establish a facility (area) for community mulch and composting. (d) Encourage water friendly gardening.	There are increased numbers of households with energy and water saving devices. Residents recycle their green and household waste locally, reducing impacts on landfill. Residents have access to locally made compost. Residents are educated and aware of water usage and take action to preserve water through gardening with plants that need less water. There is decreased use of water and energy in the suburb and the footprint of the neighbourhood is reduced.
2.4	Clean up and reduce graffiti (a) Get involved in Graffiti Action Day. Investigate innovative graffiti removal initiatives. (b) Establish a graffiti reporting system to speed up graffiti removal in the neighbourhood. Direct graffiti reports on Council property to Council Customer Service Centre, and private property to the Police.	Valentine is free from graffiti. The community is involved in projects to monitor and clean up graffiti.
2.5	Education Run a series of workshops and activities about sustainability and the local environment, e.g. native gardening, waste management, preparing for Peak Oil, energy use and GreenPower, being a good bushland neighbour.	Residents are well informed on aspects of sustainable living including renewable energy, water and waste management and eco-friendly gardening principles.
2.6	Community Garden (a) Create a shared community space for growing and learning about edible gardening. (b) Liaise with Bahtahbah Aboriginal Land Council to look at opportunities to create a local bush tucker garden or build understanding of traditional ecological knowledge.	There is a vibrant, productive community run garden, where people interested in edible food, community and gardening can meet, eat, grow, and share knowledge and skills. There is a venue for education and interaction with the indigenous community around bush tucker and traditional ecological knowledge.

2.7	Reduce car use (a) Improve access to Fernleigh Track and Eleebana. (b) Work with Council to improve footpaths and walkways through suburb. Identify new and linking routes to create a safe network of footpaths to key areas in suburb. (c) Lobby for improved public transport. (d) Investigate the possibility of starting a school walking bus.	There is a safe and connected network of shared pathways throughout the neighbourhood. Residents regularly walk or cycle around their neighbourhood and use the connections to access neighbouring suburbs in the city. Public transport is seen as a viable option to private car use. There are fewer vehicles in Valentine and the footprint of the neighbourhood is reduced. There are health and wellbeing benefits for the community.
2.8	Natural Gas in all Valentine Investigate potential of extending natural gas pipelines through suburb.	The ecological footprint of the neighbourhood is reduced.
2.9	Safer Swimming Investigate options to establish a vessel exclusion zone at the southern end of Bennett's Park, adjacent to Green Point.	Residents have a safe, clean swimming area. There is a strengthened sense of appreciation and connection with the lake.



Protecting the natural environment

Actions		Outcomes
3.1	Caring for Green Point Foreshore Reserve (a) Support and promote Green Point Foreshore Reserve Landcare Group. (b) Lobby for improved information about reserve, using the web, signage, a trail map a pamphlet, and promotional material. Liaise with Bahtabah Aboriginal Land Council to ensure areas of cultural significance are appropriately represented. (c) Lobby for improved track signage, include natural and cultural information about reserve as well as ways to protect the reserve. (d) Liaise with Bahtabah Aboriginal Land Council to ensure areas of cultural significance are appropriately represented. (e) Increase activities in the reserve, e.g. bushwalking, spotlighting and educational walks.	There is a strengthened sense of pride and connection to the Green Point Foreshore Reserve and the Lake. The Green Point Foreshore Reserve Landcare Group is active and revitalised. The health of Green Point Foreshore Reserve is improved and maintained. Residents appreciate and care about their natural and cultural environment. Residents understand the threats to local bushland and waterways and take steps to protect and care for their local environment. There is informative, educational signage in significant areas in the Reserve increasing awareness of local environmental, cultural and social values and generating a sense of local pride. Residents understand and respect the natural and cultural values of the Reserve.
3.2	Support Allambee Park Bushland Reserve Landcare Group Find ways to support and promote Allambee Bushland Reserve Landcare Group.	The Allambee Park Bushland Reserve Landcare Group is active and revitalised. The health of Allambee Park Bushland Reserve is improved and maintained.

3.3	Keep Valentine clean (a) Participate in Clean Up Australia Day (b) Organise a Community Clean Up Day as a community activity. (c) Identify illegal dumping 'hot spots' and work with Council to find ways to reduce and eradicate dumping. (d) Investigate additional sites for rubbish and recycling bins.	The neighbourhood is clean and free of litter and there are annual clean ups. Illegal dumping in bushland areas is managed and prevented. Residents are able to take action to reduce littering and dumping in their neighbourhood.
3.4	Protect Bennetts Park (a) Investigate options to prevent vehicles driving into and through the park. (b) Investigate options to plant more trees in the park to create shade and replace those lost in storms, e.g: working with Landcare. (c) Investigate ways to reduce illegal dumping of rubbish in park.	Bennetts Park is a safe, clean park that continues to be used and loved by a wide cross section of residents and visitors. Bennetts Park is respected by visitors and residents, who take responsibility for its maintenance. There is an avenue for residents to get involved in looking after Bennetts Park.
3.5	Community bushfire plan Work with Fire and Rescue NSW to engage residents to develop a community bushfire plan and raise awareness about bushfire preparedness.	The community understands the threats of bushfire and is well prepared for a bushfire emergency. There are links between the Valentine community and the Fire and Rescue NSW.
3.6	Keeping the Lake clean (a) Reduce run off into the lake, through increasing community awareness about stormwater runoff, supporting community monitoring of silt traps, lobbying for silt traps in Bennetts Park. (b) Work with Council to create signage for Valentine Parks, e.g. "We love our neighbourhood, please respect our shared parks and waterways and help us keep them clean".	The health of Lake is improved and maintained. Residents understand the threats to the Lake and take steps to protect and care for their local environment. There is a strengthened sense of pride and connection to the local environment and the Lake.
3.7	Dinghy boats on foreshore Lobby Council for alternative method of storing dinghies and removal of old and decaying dinghies.	Residents and dingy owners have an improved, agreed method of storing dinghies in Valentine. There is better access to foreshore and shaded areas under trees. There are reduced safety hazards for children playing in park.
3.8	Shepherds Creek Investigate potential projects to improve the health of Shepherds Creek.	Residents are engaged in projects to maintain the health of Shepherds Creek.



Join us!

Get involved in something positive!

The Valentine Sustainable Neighbourhood Group welcomes residents who live in Valentine or have a connection to the area through family, work, friends, history, experience or any other reason.

If you are interested in getting involved in any of the actions in this plan or have new ideas on how to improve our neighbourhood we would love to hear from you.

Please contact us for details of our current projects and activities.

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'Talk to your neighbour and encourage as many people as possible to attend!'

Valentine resident

Acknowledgements

Lions Club of Valentine

Valentine Public School

Allambee Bushland Reserve Landcare Group

Valentine Bowling Club

Green Point Foreshore Reserve Landcare Group





This project has been assisted by the NSW Government through its Environmental Trust.

The Sustainable Neighbourhood Program is supported by Lake Macquarie City Council.



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