

# » community report **Alstonville2036**

**What did you tell us? A report to the Alstonville community. September 2016**



***During July and August 2016, Council staff undertook a community engagement process to support the preparation of the Alstonville Strategic Plan. The primary aims of the engagement have been to gauge how the Alstonville community feels about Alstonville itself now, and into the future; what is working now and what could be improved; and determine how we can move forward into a future for all.***

***The engagement was undertaken within the context of Council's roles and responsibilities in relation to strategic planning. The feedback gathered will be used to guide the preparation of a strategic plan for Alstonville.***

## » what did we do?

To launch the community engagement, we wrote to every household in the urban area of Alstonville itself and also to surrounding landholders, a total of 3000 letters. We included a postcard highlighting our Alstonville2036 website.

The website offered some background to the Alstonville2036 project including some demographic information, work done on the environmental heritage of the Plateau by Southern Cross University in 1996 and a summary of previous feedback Council had received from residents.

We set up a street stall on the corner of Daley and Main Streets on Thursday 30 June, Friday 1 July and Saturday 2 July 2016 to talk to people. We also offered a short survey through our website, a dedicated email address or an opportunity to meet one-on-one or in a group. All of these opportunities were taken up. The survey was open for seven weeks and surveys were received throughout that time.



*Alstonville2036 postcard delivered to 3000 residents and to local businesses*

## » what feedback did we receive?

People came to talk to us personally – at our street stalls and also in meetings or appointments made by keen community members. We also received emails with suggestions and ideas as well as many surveys with well thought through comments and suggestions.

We received three submissions in a map format, setting out suggestions for a town square and also for a series of walking tracks in and around Alstonville.

These creative approaches to providing feedback are great to receive because they are very visual and definite about the ideas contained within them. They often illustrate feedback that others have provided in written or verbal form.

All of this feedback (not just the summary provided here) will be considered in preparing a strategic plan for Alstonville.

This report provides a summary of issues raised within the community engagement, with a framework of government policy, Council policy and staff commentary. It provides a platform for the formal planning process for Alstonville 2036.



## Alstonville Futures Strategy

Listen



How would you like your place to change and develop over the next 20 years?  
What sorts of things would you like to see happen?  
Do you like Alstonville as it is? Or do you think there is room for new plans?  
Are you a resident, a business owner, a farmer or a frequent visitor with an interest in Alstonville and what the future holds?

### We would like to hear from you!

Over the next few months, Council staff will be collating ideas about the future of Alstonville. We will compile community ideas and present them back to the community to test how the ideas will work.

All of this work will then be the basis of a strategic plan for Alstonville, to guide change and improvements to the year 2036.

Look out around town for our postcard which you can find in various businesses. Copies have also been sent to all landholders. All landholders will be receiving a letter from us very soon. If you rent in town, we would still like to hear from you so please feel free to contact us.

*Council looks forward to hearing from you...*

### The Alstonville Futures Team



#### I want to keep in touch with the project

You can answer our short survey

You can drop us a line at  
[alstonville2036@ballina.nsw.gov.au](mailto:alstonville2036@ballina.nsw.gov.au)

You can catch us in person in the mornings at the bus shelter in Main Street on:

Thursday 30 June  
Friday 1 July  
Saturday 2 July

Or you can call us on  
02 6686 1284  
ask for Suzanne or Klaus.

[Survey](#) [Email](#)



#### got something to say?

Key questions for people to consider:

- + What are the best three things about Alstonville?
- + How has Alstonville changed since you moved here?
- + Is there something you can see that could be improved?
- + Is there an issue you would like to see considered?

If you'd prefer to provide your feedback more privately, you can email us at  
[alstonville2036@ballina.nsw.gov.au](mailto:alstonville2036@ballina.nsw.gov.au)  
or write to us at Council

[Email](#)



#### where is the project up to?

**June 2016**  
Alstonville2036 Project Launch

**July-September 2016**  
Street stalls, community meetings, web conversations

**August-October 2016**  
Development of Planning and Environmental Study

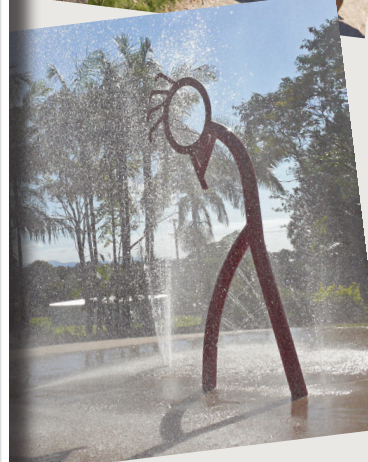
**November-December 2017**  
Alstonville 2036 PES reported to Council

**January-February 2017**  
'World Cafe' (facilitate focus groups) on some of the issues identified in the consultation

**April 2017**  
Draft Alstonville2036 Strategy reported to Council

**May 2017**  
Public Exhibition

**June 2017**  
Final Alstonville2036 Strategy



photos courtesy of  
Alstonville-Wollongbar  
Chamber of Commerce



## » who responded?

82% of respondents lived in Alstonville itself, and the remainder lived either in Wollongbar (10%) or elsewhere in the shire.

More women than men responded to the survey, and almost equal numbers of men and women visited us in the shopfront.

We had limited responses from young people, with one between 18 and 25 years of age responding and two between 25 and 34 years of age.

The graph below shows the age groups of people responding against the percentage of people in each age group.

Almost 50% of respondents had lived in Alstonville for more than 10 years. Many said they would be remaining long term with a couple stating they intended to live here 'until I die'.

The majority worked locally, either within Alstonville or the Russelton Industrial Estate, or in nearby Ballina or Lismore.

Many either had children now, or had had children who had grown up and left home but a significant proportion did not have children at all.

## » feedback themes

A few themes have been quite common in the feedback we have received. These can be loosely grouped as follows:

### ***The 'feel' of Alstonville***

People love the natural environment and the quiet atmosphere. They love the small village atmosphere. They love that people are friendly and welcoming for newcomers. They feel it is a family place.

### ***Agriculture is important, and we shouldn't lose the opportunities it provides***

Many people commented on the fertile soils surrounding Alstonville and the need to retain their productive capacity for agriculture of some kind. Even where a submission provided feedback on growth options, this theme came through strongly.

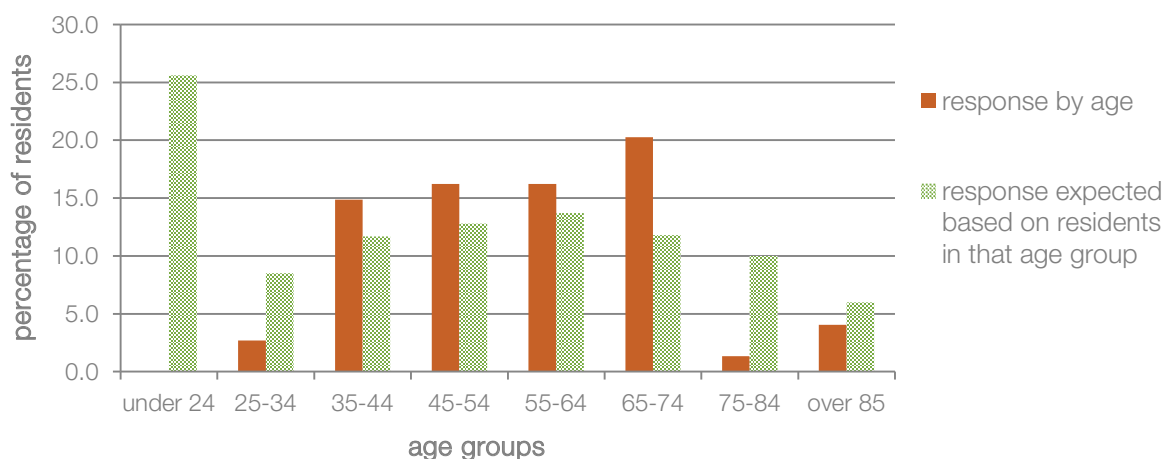
### ***Some level of support for further development***

At this stage about 60% of submissions have suggested there is some (limited) scope for further development, either by intensification of densities in some parts of Alstonville or for extension of the urban area. This will be explored further in the Planning and Environment Study with the Alstonville community.

### ***Day tourism***

People said they thought of Alstonville as a good place to encourage 'day tourism' (similar to the way that Bangalow is a destination in itself). As one person said, "Day tourism is the new weekend away". Ensuring there is a balance between liveability and accommodating a day tourism crowd will need consideration.

## age group responses received vs demographic profile for Alstonville



### **Flexible Housing Options**

A number of older people told us that they were currently living in a large family home on a suburban block but that their children had moved away and they would like to move further into town. They didn't want a tiny home, but they wanted to live in a 3 bedroom townhouse style home with some backyard. They were happy to live in closer quarters with other residents and would like to walk into town along level footpaths.

Different styles of housing dependent on proximity to the CBD to cater for all age and ability groups was seen as a way to keep housing opportunity flexible and affordable.

### **Traffic – both road and pedestrian**

A number of respondents provided feedback on improvements they see as needed in traffic management, especially around the schools and the CBD. Footpaths were also a common theme, particularly in some areas, but came up as an issue needing to be addressed in many locations. These have been referred to the Pedestrian Access Management Plan review process which is currently underway.

### **Hikes and Bikes**

Long walking paths and longish cycling routes were also suggested, using the beautiful scenery afforded close by. Cycling would utilise mostly existing roads, with sufficient signage to create awareness that cyclists were likely to be on the road.

Walking tracks would need some further consideration about how they could be implemented.

Many people also use bikes as a way to get around town easily and ways to make this safer and more integrated into the local traffic system was often raised.

### **The Main Street**

A town square was one idea put forward to provide a place for people to meet and a natural 'centre' to the town. Most people also wanted to see more vegetation of various kinds as they felt it added to the ambience and character of the village, although there was concern about ensuring visibility and adequate parking as well.

## **» Alstonville2036 project timeline**



**If you have any questions or concerns please contact:**

Strategic and Community Facilities Group, ph 6686 1284.  
[alstonville2036@ballina.nsw.gov.au](mailto:alstonville2036@ballina.nsw.gov.au)