

NEIGHBOURHOOD CENTRE AMALGAMATION



Frequently Asked Questions

Why do the Bellingen and Urunga Neighbourhood Centres want to amalgamate?

The proposed new structure will combine resources to build organisational capacity. This will safeguard the future sustainability and viability of both organisations and improve chances of securing additional funding to deliver essential community services across the whole Shire.

How will the community benefit from the amalgamation?

The aim of the proposed unification is to strengthen existing services and enable opportunities to improve the delivery of community programs across the entire Shire, including the Dorrigo Plateau. Stronger Together.

How was the decision to amalgamate made?

In late 2017, Bellingen Neighbourhood Centre Inc and Urunga Neighbourhood Centre Incorporated commissioned an Options Study to determine whether an amalgamation was feasible. The study resulted in a joint agreement to move towards an amalgamation of the two organisations. Both Management Committees have been meeting on a bi-monthly basis during 2018 to build stronger alliances and in January 2019 each committee unanimously agreed to commence the formal process of amalgamation. A process of planning and due diligence has occurred during 2019 and on the 19th of September 2019 both Management Committees formally voted to seek the endorsement of the members of both organisations to formalise the amalgamation.

Where will the amalgamated organisation be based?

The new amalgamated organisation will continue to use the two existing neighbourhood centre buildings as the administration base. For now, employees and volunteers currently based in Urunga will remain in Urunga and employees and volunteers currently based in Bellingen will remain in Bellingen. The management committee will likely alternate meeting locations, in a similar fashion to the existing joint management committee meetings.

How will the amalgamation change my current membership?

All current members of Bellingen Neighbourhood Centre Inc and Urunga Neighbourhood Centre Incorporated automatically become members of the new amalgamated association.

Do Bellingen and Urunga Neighbourhood Centres currently deliver different services?

Yes, Urunga Neighbourhood Centre manages Bellingen Shire's mobile resource playgroup and auspices Urunga Men's Shed. It also coordinates a range of local activities including mah-jong classes, martial arts, craft groups and alcoholics anonymous meetings. Bellingen Neighbourhood Centre delivers Centrelink Services, Bellingen Youth Services and a No Interest Loan Scheme. It also coordinates emergency relief and enables people who are experiencing financial difficulty to pay off their fines by participating in specific approved activities. Both Centres play a vital role in generating community connection and wellbeing.

Will each Neighbourhood Centre continue to deliver the same services after the amalgamation?

We expect most services to remain the same. The most significant change is that it will be easier to deliver services across the different localities in our Shire.

Are any employees going to lose their jobs?

It is expected that there won't be any job losses as a result of the amalgamation. Staff positions are ultimately dependent on funding from governments and other sources. We hope the amalgamation will eventually create new jobs because the new organisation will be better positioned to secure additional funding.

How will the amalgamation affect the volunteers?

The amalgamation will positively affect volunteers. If additional funding can be secured under the new organisational structure, we anticipate that there will be a more diverse range of opportunities for volunteers.

When is the amalgamation likely to happen?

The question on whether the amalgamate is formally being put to the members of the Bellingen Neighbourhood Centre Inc and the Urunga Neighbourhood Centre Incorporated at their respective Annual General Meetings on the 24th of October 2019. If three quarters of the votes cast are in favour of the amalgamation, then applications to create a new amalgamated incorporated association will be made to the appropriate government departments. It is not known how long it will take for this approval to be granted, but it is likely to be provided some time between December 2019 and March 2020. Once final approval is granted, the amalgamation will have formally occurred. A process of combining and harmonising strategies, systems and processes will then occur over time.

How can I provide ideas, suggestions or opportunities around the amalgamation?

If you would like further information please email bncunc2020@gmail.com, write to PO Box 121 Urunga NSW 2455, or call 0429 778 706.