



# AIDA

November 2020 • [www.aireys-inlet.org](http://www.aireys-inlet.org)

Urquhart Bluff • Aireys Inlet • Fairhaven • Moggs Creek • Eastern View



## Surf Coast Council elections

The results of council elections were announced on Thursday 5 November and the Anglesea Ward has two new councillors – Fairhaven resident Libby Stapleton, and Mike Bodsworth from Anglesea. We very much look forward to working with both of them on issues that have the potential to affect our area. New Lorne ward councillor, Gary Allen, was elected unopposed. His ward includes Eastern View and Moggs Creek and AIDA hopes to establish a good working relationship with Gary.

Only two members of the previous council were returned – Rose Hodge (Torquay Ward) and Heather Wellington (Winchelsea Ward).

One of our previous councillors, Margot Smith, did not stand for council after serving two terms. We wish Margot well and will miss her interest and support of AIDA's work. Our other previous ward councillor, Tony Revell, was unsuccessful in his bid for a second term.

Tony represented our interests very well on council and we thank him for his accessibility and support.

The following information was provided to the Victorian Electoral Commission from our new ward councillors, who outlined:

1. their vision for the shire, and
2. the expertise or attributes they will bring to their role as councillor.

### Libby Stapleton

- 1 To nurture a community where people and environment come first; our low-key coastal village character is protected; and locals participate in transparent decision-making. To respect those who have come before us, engage with those who live here now and plan for those who will inherit the responsibilities of our future.
- 2 With a degree as a professional communicator I am skilled at listening, researching, collaborating and

advocating. My additional training as an outdoor educator provides me with insight and respect for the natural environment. I have strong relationships with many community groups through work / volunteering and significant experience working directly with council.

### Mike Bodsworth

- 1 A place of naturalness and vibrancy. Our small towns and hinterland communities stay small but strong. Careful planning ensures our unique landscapes and towns aren't adversely affected by inappropriate development. Council helps communities achieve their goals. Communities trust council's integrity and judgement. Decisions are evidence-based.
- 2 I have 18 years' experience as a landscape architect and land manager on public land, involving planning and design, project management, community engagement, risk management, recreation and tourism planning and conservation. I value good information. I work cooperatively, honestly, creatively and compassionately. I'm a good listener and an energetic contributor.

### Gary Allen

- 1 That the Shire provides to residents services and planning at the highest level to meet their needs, putting a priority upon their well-being and the enhancement of community assets. That the Council protects the environment and natural beauty of our coastline and hinterland, encouraging development sympathetic to this goal.
- 2 I respect and care for the people of the shire, having lived and worked in the district for thirty-six years. I have local, state and national experience in advocacy and a proven commitment to our community. I listen to individual and group concerns and I act upon the issues raised.

*Charlotte Allen*

## Painkalac Valley update

An appeal has been lodged with VCAT over the council's refusal of an application to build a private bridge over the Painkalac Creek.

Everybody who sent a written objection to council about the application should have received a letter from the applicants by 12 November. The letter would have included a copy of the application for the review and the applicant's statement of grounds for the review as well as a blank statement of grounds form for objectors to fill in.

Anyone who lodged an objection to the bridge

application, and who wishes to be heard at the Tribunal hearing must lodge the statement of grounds form with VCAT by 3 December 2020. A fee of \$20.70 is payable to enable you to be participate in the hearing. The form is also available at [www.vcat.vic.gov.au/respondplanning](http://www.vcat.vic.gov.au/respondplanning)

The AIDA committee will appear at the hearing and we would encourage others in the community to also lodge a statement of grounds even if you don't want to speak at the hearing.

The hearing is listed by VCAT for the 30 June and 1 July 2021 from 10:00 am to 4:30 pm and is planned to be an on-line hearing at this stage.

*Charlotte Allen*

## Litter Initiative

Noticed a group of women picking up litter around the area recently? So did we and we thought we would find out more about this wonderful initiative from local resident Glenys Drayton.



Seeing litter discarded on the side of the road occasionally and quite a lot of micro-plastics floating around the edge of the water when walking around the river precinct, Glenys posted her concerns on the local Facebook community page – '3231 Surfcoast Connection' – and a couple of local women responded by saying, 'I can't do a lot but I know how to pick up rubbish.' And so a call went out for people to help clean up the town and make it the cleanest on the coast.

Every Saturday morning, weather permitting, the group meets at the local hall carpark at 9 am loaded with gloves, some hi-vis vests and bags to put the rubbish in. After a quick chat they allocate the areas to be covered for an hour, which is usually determined by what's been noticed around town during the week. They always find rubbish and say it's a bit like housework – it never ends. What gets cleaned up one week needs redoing in another couple of weeks.

The litter is quite interesting. They've found keys, money, old tyres, soiled disposable nappies, hundreds of beer cans and bottles, computer parts, cds and mountains of plastic bags containing dog poo.

(They believe there's a serial offender who thinks that putting the dog poo in a bag and then tossing it into the bushes is how it's done!) There's always high-energy drink bottles and protein-bar wrappers discarded by cyclists.



There are a couple of remarkable observations about this group of locals ... firstly, until now the volunteers are all female (across various ages) and secondly the camaraderie and the social aspect of meeting for coffee afterwards is something everyone looks forward to.



One thing is for sure, collecting rubbish is addictive and the sisterhood does it well. Glenys says that every one of these women absolutely loves and respects where they live.

'Wouldn't it be great to roll this out Australia-wide in every regional town? Perhaps that's a future goal! In the meantime, there are the Keep Australia Beautiful campaigns – <https://kab.org.au/>

If you're interested in joining the Aireys group, contact Glenys at [glenys.d@conni.com.au](mailto:glenys.d@conni.com.au). Everyone is welcome, including men, every Saturday morning, weather permitting.

*Charlotte Allen*

## Horseriding on our beaches

The Great Ocean Road Coast Committee (GORCC) is reviewing its signage and permit conditions for horseriders using the local beaches and approached AIDA for comment on its draft signage.

GORCC says, horseriding has been a longstanding recreational activity on Fairhaven beach as a popular pastime for many community members. As visitation grows GORCC is seeking to formalise the horseriding arrangements to ensure a balance between horseriding, safety, environmental values and other beach users.

GORCC's draft sign includes the following Horse Permit Conditions:

- No horses within the Painkalac Creek estuary or east of the Painkalac Creek mouth
- Where signage is displayed please ride on the waterline at walking pace to protect threatened hooded plovers
- No galloping permitted
- Please remove all horse manure from paths and car parks
- Lead a maximum of one horse on beach access pathways
- Ride on or below the high-tide line at all times
- Keep horses away from fences and do not enter dunes
- Ride safely, wear a protective helmet and be considerate of other reserve users

While the AIDA committee recognises and understands the popularity of horseriding along our beaches it responded saying that as a general comment it would prefer that horses are not permitted on the beach at all – or at least not during the summer months when there are so many other people using the beach or when hooded plovers are nesting.

However, if horses are to be permitted the horseriders should be asked to 'Remove all horse manure from paths, car parks and off the beach.' (We don't see why other beach users should have to avoid horse droppings on the sand or in the water.)

The sign should indicate that the public can report riders not obeying the permit conditions to GORCC using the contacts provided.

The committee also added that it thinks there is an accident waiting to happen to have horses going through the crowded beach at the Fairhaven Life Saving Club and that horses should only be permitted from Moggs to Fairhaven, or from Fairhaven to the Memorial Arch.

*Charlotte Allen*

# Great Ocean Road Communities Network

## Highlighting the critical role of community

Helen Keller's comment, 'Alone, we can do so little; together, we can do so much,' reflects some of the early thinking behind the establishment by AIDA this year of the Great Ocean Road Communities Network (GORCN). In August the inaugural meeting of community groups along the Great Ocean Road was held on Zoom to form an effective voice to government and other organisations on issues of importance to the social, environmental, economic and cultural future of their communities.

Many of the thorny issues faced by one community, such as overtourism, strain on local amenity, rising flow-on tourism costs to the community, tourism revenue leakage, degradation of sensitive habitat and coastline, traffic issues, fire risk, low-season lack of economic viability, etc., are often experienced by many communities along the Great Ocean Road.

AIDA has long recognised that each community has a distinctive character and this is its strength and gives the Great Ocean Road its vitality. We also recognise that we have much in common, such as our need for a powerful and effective voice to government – 'together, we can do much'. Elsewhere in this newsletter you will read about the start of the new Great Ocean Road Coast and Parks Authority (GORCAPA) and its important remit to 'manage, protect, rehabilitate and foster resilience of the natural, cultural and heritage values of coastal Crown land and marine waters along the Great Ocean Road'. In our view, one of the most critical factors in GORCAPA achieving its purpose, is it developing an effective working relationship with the communities of the Great Ocean Road, which have the capacity to contribute local clarity and insight. The newly formed GORCN will be able to help facilitate that 'community-government relationship' and help make sure the community's voice is heard.

## GORCN's foundational principles

Groups in the network share common ground, in that all are committed to:

- coastal and bush protection and regeneration
- thriving, diverse local communities
- limitations on tourist numbers
- community involvement with relevant decision-making
- recognition of climate change, the need to act to

- mitigate its causes and to address its risks
- protection of local character
- nature-based and regenerative tourism
- analysis and communication of tourism's invisible costs
- evidence-based research to establish the carrying capacity of the Great Ocean Road and an agreed set of indicators to monitor Great Ocean Road conditions
- appropriate infrastructure provision consistent with the above

The current communities in GORCN are:

- Anglesea Community Network
- Save Anglesea
- Greater Torquay Alliance
- Friends of Lorne
- Wye River Separation Creek Community Association
- Geelong Environment Council
- Kennett River Association
- Otway Forum
- AIDA Aireys Inlet and District Association

Five additional communities are currently considering joining GORCN.

GORCN is looking forward to working collaboratively with the new Authority and helping to create strong, resilient communities, post-Covid, along the Great Ocean Road.

*Suzanne Cavanagh*

## What if?

'The more unpredictable the world is, the more we rely on predictions.' *Steve Rivkin*

In the context of bushfires though, should we ...?

I guess there aren't too many of us who have not been unsettled by the uncertainty of life during this Covid moment in time. We are now increasingly being told that uncertainty and change will be part of our future landscape. Natural disaster is a growing risk in that future landscape due to the changing global climate. 'Disasters are expected to become more complex, unpredictable and difficult to manage' according to Local Government NSW on the 2020 Royal Commission's findings.

One of the constants in the findings from recent bushfire royal commissions, in seeking to understand why one fire-impacted community proves more resilient than another, has been the locally-led response, community self-reliance and

the ability of the local community to pull together using their existing and combined capacity and capabilities. In summary, local preparation is crucial to success.

Many of us have fire plans, but many are under the illusion that the agencies will always be able to sort things out. The reality is that you can't rely on emergency services such as CFA, Victoria Police or Forest Fire Management for help during the first hours of a fire. They're attending to critical fire management. That reality is a sobering and salutary message of the commissions and one that starts us thinking, what if? Such thinking is the essence of scenario thinking – a structured approach to anticipating plausible futures, rather than relying on predictions, by focusing on practical, prepared local strategic response.

AIDA sees this preparedness as central to the sound management of fire risk in our region. As such, we are enormously appreciative of the opportunity to have the highly experienced bushfire incident leadership expert Jamie Mackenzie, who has worked in the fire incident area for thirty-five years, guide us through AIDA's forthcoming online scenario workshop to build our local resilience.

Jamie introduced Fireline Leadership and Incident Leadership training to Victorian and Australian emergency agencies in 2005 and has been involved in the design and implementation of training programs to build leadership, incident management and hazard management capabilities for emergency services personnel, industry and community members. His list of awards for program development around thinking change, such as the Fire Awareness Award in 2015 and Resilience Australia Award in 2016, speaks to his much-lauded approach. The award of the Australian Fire Service Medal in the 2015 Australia Day honours was further testament to his contribution.

Jamie will present a scenario workshop to explore the realities faced in a bushfire emergency and how those challenges may be tackled – analysing what's required. It follows a community strengths-based approach designed to reduce the reliance on individuals, single groups, agencies and government by drawing upon current and potential local people and resources. Jamie explained, 'All the skills that may be required if the community becomes isolated, cut-off from systems and services or overwhelmed, are already in your community.' Learning how to prepare ourselves then, using our local skills, will be a key part of the workshop. Hearing how other communities have done it will likely also be informative.

Jamie collaborates with a range of emergency-response agencies during his workshops and we are

grateful that our local agencies will be joining him in this workshop, providing a real-life lens through which we can better understand such issues as traffic management, evacuation, road closures and the myriad other practical issues we may face to be prepared for a fire day.

Imagine this scenario:

It's a hot summer's morning. The wind seems to have been increasing, and the temperature is higher than predicted. Some of your family are at the beach, some are shopping. The Great Ocean Road is busy as usual and in gridlock in some places. The Vic Emergency App alerts you to a fire at the back of Aireys. You look in that direction and see smoke rising ...

What's your next step? Jamie and the agencies will take the community through fire-day scenarios such as that.

The Surf Coast has a long history of being threatened by fire. Being fully prepared is the best way to equip every member of our community to grapple with those future uncertainties around fire-day action. Attending What if? – a free event – is your first step.



#### Event details

EVENT: What if?

WHEN: Thursday 26 November 2020 at 7.30 pm

FORMAT: Webinar

REGISTRATION: Eventbrite

At: <https://www.eventbrite.com/e/what-if-tickets-126752334645>

AIDA appreciates the immense support our local agencies have offered the Aireys Inlet district community in helping AIDA deliver this webinar; Victoria Police, Forest Fire Management Victoria, Aireys CFA, Parks Victoria, DELWP and the Surf Coast Shire. Our special gratitude goes to Jamie Mackenzie for running this workshop, for guiding and supporting our community and for helping us build our local leadership so that we can become a resilient community, not a reliant community.

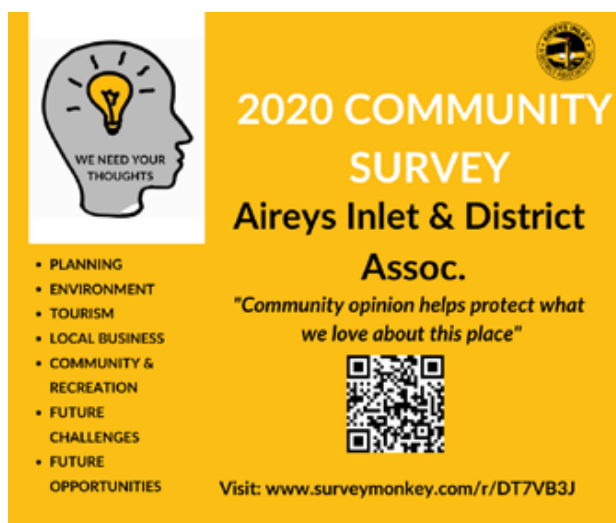
*Charlotte Allen*

## AIDA Community Survey

In 1983, AIDA initiated a survey of district residents to gather community opinion on what we love about this place and what AIDA should attempt to protect. Since then there have been follow-up surveys approximately every five years, providing an unusual longitudinal picture of how the district and the interests of its residents (and regular visitors) have changed.

In the first surveys it was possible to elicit help from the Surf Coast Council to ensure that everyone received a copy to complete. Then privacy laws apparently made that process impossible and the last survey was sent only to AIDA members.

This year we are repeating the survey.



The poster is yellow and features a lightbulb icon in a head silhouette on the left with the text "WE NEED YOUR THOUGHTS". The main title is "2020 COMMUNITY SURVEY Aireys Inlet & District Assoc." with a quote: "Community opinion helps protect what we love about this place". A QR code is in the center, and the survey link is at the bottom: "Visit: www.surveymonkey.com/r/DT7VB3J". A list of topics is on the left: PLANNING, ENVIRONMENT, TOURISM, LOCAL BUSINESS, COMMUNITY & RECREATION, FUTURE CHALLENGES, and FUTURE OPPORTUNITIES.

As we have all experienced, 2020 is not a normal year; the demography of the town has shifted under the impact of the pandemic. The bigger questions are not just 'what we love and want to protect about the place' but what we would want to see the district become in the post Covid-19 recovery. That question takes on additional importance as we enter the phase of being a Great Ocean Township after the designation of the whole of the Great Ocean Road as a single tourist destination, soon under a new authority that will guide all planning and development for the road. The state government task force established in 2017 to consider the future of the road as a visitor destination, found that the Great Ocean Road attracted more visitors per year than the Great Barrier Reef and Uluru combined. Predictions before Covid-19 were that the road would attract 10,000 visitors per day.

The state has 'the visitor economy' as one of the major planks of our economic recovery.

Communities along the road have formed a new network (see GORCN) to ensure that there is the

possibility for some coordination of responses to the strategic work on the new authority over 2021 and beyond.

It has never been more important that the voices and interest and concerns of those who call this district home are articulated. For that reason, the current 2020 survey is being circulated as widely as possible. Posters have gone up around town; all the various interest groups and representative bodies for the district have been notified with the address of the survey and are urging their networks to complete it.

So far, some 250 people have filled out the survey. But we are striving for something closer to 400.

Please, if you have not completed the survey, follow the links below (or go to the AIDA website) and tell us what you think. We would like to hear from every person in the town – not just households or businesses.

The web link is: <https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/DT7VB3J>

Chris Ryan

## New Great Ocean Road Authority Board appointed and ready to roll



'How can you govern a country which has two hundred and forty-six varieties of cheese?' *Charles de Gaulle, President of France*

The Great Ocean Road clocked up a century last year and proudly wears its badge as one of the world's most famous scenic drives and one of Australia's flagship tourism experiences. But in recent years (before Covid), the Great Ocean Road has felt the strain of high levels of visitation at some 11,000 visitors a day. The impact of that strain had long been evident in mounting traffic issues, coastal degradation and amenity strain. Increasingly, local communities have worried about the liveability of their coastal villages. Concerns were raised about the government's ability to appropriately manage and protect the Great Ocean Road for future generations, not least of all when some fourteen different bodies had responsibility for aspects of its management.

In 2018 the Victorian Government established a governance reform program via the Great Ocean Road Action Plan. A key part of that governance reform was

the simplification of the fragmented management of the Great Ocean Road via the establishment of a single overarching authority due to begin operation shortly (by 1 December 2020), known as the Great Ocean Road Coast and Parks Authority [GORCAPA].

GORCAPA will 'manage, protect, rehabilitate and foster resilience of the natural, cultural and heritage values of coastal Crown land and marine waters along the Great Ocean Road' (Great Ocean Road Action Plan).



The inaugural Board of GORCAPA was recently appointed after a recruitment process that sought broad and substantial experience across marine and coastal environmental conservation, public administration and governance, tourism, and planning.

The Board Chair is Libby Mears, former mayor of the Surf Coast Shire, chair of the Victorian Coastal Council and well-known to the local community. The other members of the Board are:

Peter Dorling (deputy chair)  
Associate Professor Dr Daniel Ierodiaconou  
Mr David Pope  
Mr Douglas Humann AM  
Mr Jason Mifsud  
Mr Wayne Kayler-Thomson  
Ms Christine Wyatt  
Ms Jenny McMahon  
Ms Jodie Leonard  
Ms Sarah Eccles  
Ms Terry Bracks AM

For further information: Media release from The Hon Lily D'Ambrosio MP <https://tinyurl.com/y3czxchg>

OR <https://www.planning.vic.gov.au/policy-and-strategy/great-ocean-road-action-plan>

AIDA congratulates all appointees and wishes them well in undertaking the significant reform program to deliver effective governance of the Great Ocean Road, protecting its coastal and marine environments and distinctive areas and supporting responsible tourism visitation that benefits the local communities of the Great Ocean Road.

*Suzanne Cavanagh*

## The night sky

Visitors and residents of the area are often amazed at the beauty of our night sky. On a clear night we see why it is called the Milky Way. The stars sparkle and twinkle like diamonds, and lead to all sorts of discussions about just what might be out there.

One of AIDA's aims is to preserve the appearance of the night sky. AIDA is a member of the [International Dark Sky Association](#) (IDA). The association is based in Arizona and dedicated to the preservation of the night sky and minimising the adverse effects of light pollution. The IDA offers designation at various levels to parks, facilities and communities to become dark sky places.

AIDA, with the support of the IDA (Victorian Chapter) has begun the process of getting accreditation for Aireys Inlet and the surrounding district to become a dark-sky community. In order to get accreditation AIDA requires the support of both the local council and the community. There needs to be support for good outdoor lighting policies, rehabilitation of poor-quality outdoor lighting installations, and education of residents and visitors on the importance of the night sky.

The process of accreditation typically takes between one and three years, and is along the lines of other conservation and environmental designation programs such as UNESCO world heritage sites and biosphere reserves. The process starts with an expression of interest, followed by a formal application, and then final approval.

Accreditation will have many far-reaching benefits for the community, and the environment. Environmentally, light pollution interferes with breeding cycles, hormone levels and vulnerability to predators in all animals. Cutting down on light pollution may see the re-emergence of endangered species that depend on a level of darkness for their food source. For example, the pygmy possum in the Victorian Alps, a critically endangered species, depends on the Bogong moth as a food source. The Bogong moth is disturbed by light levels as it migrates from Queensland to Victoria. Hindering its migration results in starvation of the pygmy possum.

Other communities have used accreditation to promote astrotourism, astronomical photography and astronomy. Astrotourism has emerged as a key travel trend in the last few years, so much so that Lonely Planet has just released [Dark Skies](#) a tourism guide to dark skies. The book includes thirty-five dark-sky sites and over sixty dark-sky-accredited national parks – mostly in remote places.



**Night sky at Cape Shank by Sally Webber; the very bright dot is Venus**

Aireys, while not remote, is ideally placed to offer dark-sky tours to visitors. Because of the proximity to Melbourne, and minimal lighting, astrotourism is perhaps something that could be developed as a way to encourage visitors to stay longer and explore the area, the sort of tourism that offers regeneration rather than degradation.

Aireys and its surrounds are unique in that there is a clause in the planning controls that preserves the visibility of the night sky by limiting artificial lighting. These planning controls are unique to our area and are incorporated in the [Aireys Inlet to Eastern View Strategy](#) (clauses 21.12-2 and 21.12-3 Objective 2) and in the design objectives of the planning scheme for the hinterland.

While these planning controls do not apply to public bodies, such as Regional Roads Victoria and Surf Coast Shire Council, they are advised to take note of them. Recently, Regional Roads Victoria took the clause into account when planning the lighting

on the Moggs Creek bridge. Initially a light nearly 6 metres tall was going to be installed. This light had extensive spill onto the beach, the surrounding areas, and into the houses that front the Great Ocean Road. After consultation, Regional Roads Victoria agreed to install a much lower light and hidden in the gabions. The light would be triggered by a movement sensor, hence fulfilling its safety function, but at the same time limiting the unnecessary spill of light.

As residents we can play our part in keeping the night sky dark by not using unnecessary external lighting, and by closing curtains and blinds at night. Unnecessary lighting not only dilutes the beauty of the darkness, but is also a waste of energy. When external lighting is needed, perhaps a low light that illuminates a path is more suitable than a bright overhead light, or even the use of a torch.

In the meantime, we should consider ourselves lucky to be able to regularly see the beauty of the stars, celebrate the wonders of the night sky, and strive to protect it for the benefit of all living creatures.

*Frieda Wachsmann*