



AIDA

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



Our unique valley

Two recent events have underlined why the Painkalac Creek and Valley are seen as two of the environmental jewels of the Victorian West Coast.

The Painkalac Creek has been listed by the Commonwealth Government as one of Victoria's threatened salt-wedge estuaries. A salt-wedge estuary has a unique ecology, occurring where limited tidal flow of salt water into a river or creek leads to layering of salt water under a layer of fresh water.

The unique nature of the Painkalac Creek and Valley has also been underlined by the finding of the remains of a swamp antechinus on Lot 2 Bambra Rd and the identification of a colony of the threatened native species around the inlet from a mammal survey by Prof.

Indigenous plants: spike sedge, pale rush, broom rush, water ribbons and cotula, spontaneously regenerated after destocking in 2019 around a wetland on Lot 2

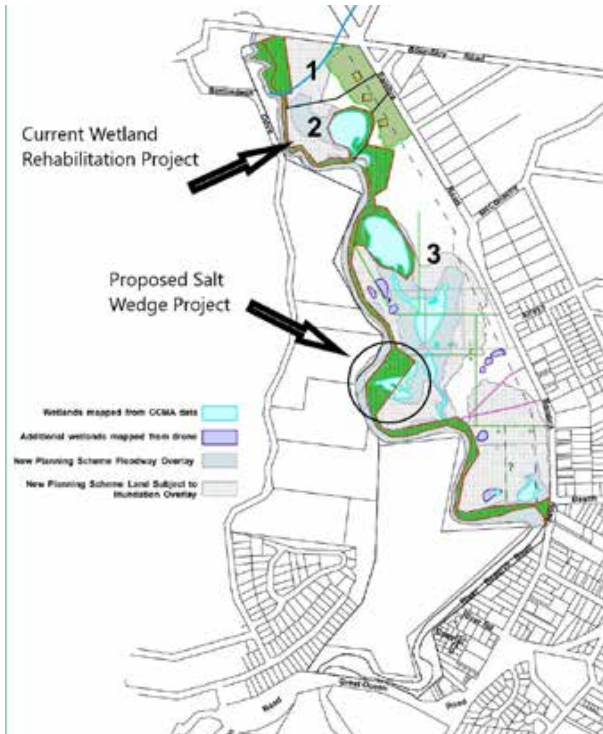
Barbara Wilson and Dr Mark Garkaklis in August 2021.

Inspired by this unique and precious ecology, plans are underway to extend the revegetation of the Valley from the 4.4ha Lot 2 Bambra Rd Aireys Inlet site to another approximately 1.2ha block of land further along the valley. This area is Crown Land managed by the Surf Coast Shire. This new area of rehabilitation is being referred to as the Salt-Wedge Project.

Revegetation work and restoration of the ephemeral wetland on Lot 2 commenced in 2019 supported by both a Landcare and Commonwealth Government

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Wild Otways Initiative grant. There have been over 7500 indigenous seedlings planted, mainly from Otways Indigenous Nursery in Aireys Inlet, and approximately 1ha of native grassland sown, all with the help of ANGAIR, local volunteers and local paid contractors.



The current Lot 2 rehabilitation site and the new Salt-Wedge Project site, the roughly triangular area marked in green in the black circle.

Map supplied by Ian Godfrey.

There are already several dozen trees planted by the shire on the new Salt-Wedge Project site but it is otherwise covered with pasture grass. The site includes a small watercourse that drains water from the middle of the Valley into the Painkalac Creek. The shire has already very successfully planted a long stretch of the eastern bank of the creek with indigenous trees and shrubs. ANGAIR has applied for funding through a new grant under the Wild Otways Initiative to continue rehabilitation of the area to improve water quality in the Painkalac Creek through the establishment of native vegetation along the natural watercourse, provide further habitat for native animals and birds, and to establish a corridor of restored habitat along the length of the eastern bank of the Painkalac Creek. Hopefully this area can one day become a great halfway stop on a 'Walk the Painkalac Trail' running between Butler's Bend and Old Coach Road. Rehabilitation work is planned to commence in autumn next year.

Mick Loughnan

Painkalac Valley – VCAT Decision

AIDA members were informed, by email, about the VCAT decision over the application for a private bridge over the Painkalac Creek that was handed down on Monday 1 November. The information is repeated here for those members who have not provided AIDA with an email address and who receive their newsletters via post. Read the VCAT decision [here](#). The AIDA committee is very disappointed that the decision is to allow a planning permit for the bridge, which is against the Surf Coast Shire's decision to refuse the application. The applicant must now obtain consent from the Corangamite Catchment Management Authority and DELWP to construct the bridge, as well as a licence/lease from the Surf Coast Shire for the bridge to be built on Crown land and public land that the council manages on behalf of the community. The AIDA committee remains concerned about many aspects of the proposed bridge.

Charlotte Allen

Walk the Painkalac

A small group of people have decided to regularly walk the proposed 'Walk the Painkalac' path along the creek to raise awareness of the path. At the moment, there are some beautiful wetlands and lots of bird life.

If you are interested in joining us, we start from Lot 2 on Bambra Rd at 2pm on Wednesdays. Refer to map in previous article for location of Lot 2. The distance we walk is only about 4 km but with chatting and checking on the birds it may take 1.5 hours. Some areas are wet, so waterproof footwear is necessary.

Janice Carpenter

Libby Stapleton re-elected mayor

On Tuesday 16 November the Surf Coast Shire Council re-elected our ward councillor, Libby Stapleton, to another term as mayor. Deputy mayor, Liz Pattison, was also re-elected for another term. Our congratulations to them both and our thanks to Libby for all she has done for our area and the shire.

Charlotte Allen

Dark sky update

AIDA, with the support of the International Dark Sky Association Victorian chapter (IDAVic), is in the process of applying for accreditation to become a dark-sky community. In order to get accreditation, AIDA requires the support of both the council and the community. The process is a long one and often takes several years.

As part of the requirement for community involvement, AIDA is proposing to hold a dark-sky event next year. Details are still to be finalised, but the event may

take the form of a presentation to view the night sky in real time conducted by the IDAVic. This presentation can occur indoors regardless of weather conditions. After the presentation, weather permitting, there will be a viewing of the night sky with IDA telescopes.

In the meantime, if you would like to do your own star gazing, and find out a little more about the night sky, you can contribute to the mapping of light pollution with an app, known as the dark sky meter. In your app store search for 'globe at night' and the dark sky meter will come up. Once installed the app will measure the amount of light in the night sky, taking into account weather conditions. This information can then be submitted to the Globe at Night initiative, which is an international citizen-science-based project to raise public awareness of the impact of light pollution. More than 200,000 measurements have been contributed over the last fourteen years. This data can be viewed by going to [Globe at Night](https://www.globeatnight.org/). The site has a lot of interesting information about the demise of our night sky, the effects of the disruption of diurnal patterns on animals, the mythology surrounding our skies, and how to find constellations.



Aurora australis

Sally Webber taken on 5 November 2021

In November a representative from AIDA attended the IDAVic monthly meeting. Discussion at this meeting centred around the damage caused by the new LED streetlights that have been installed in Victoria, including on the Surf Coast Shire. Although our area has minimal street lighting, thanks to the vigilance of local residents, the new LED streetlights, while more energy efficient than the sodium vapour and metal halide lights, are damaging to the environment as a result of a colour temperature of 4000 K. The International Dark Sky Association recommends a colour temperature of 3000 K or less. As a community we can lobby council, the Municipal Association of Victoria and power companies to install dimmers and turn off street lights at a certain time every night. This is now legislated in France.

Closer to home, the City of Melbourne has recognised the value of cutting light pollution in its 2021 Lighting Strategy. It is now legislated that planning permits issued by the City of Melbourne must comply with the AS 4282, 'Control of the Obtrusive Effects of Outdoor Lighting'. At present Surf Coast shire does not have a lighting strategy.

Our night sky inspires us to wonder and to dream. It has been the inspiration for some of humankind's greatest achievements; it enables us to reflect on our place in the universe. It has always been there until recently. Now this part of our heritage is rapidly disappearing, due to uncontrolled, and often unnecessary, outdoor lighting. AIDA's bid to gain accreditation as a dark-sky community is the beginning of reclaiming our common human heritage.

Frieda Wachsmann

GORCN Climate Change and Coastal Erosion Webinars

A highly successful series on a thorny issue for the coast
The Great Ocean Road is increasingly witness to sea-level rise, coastal inundation and erosion impacts – testament to the devastation being wrought by climate change to many places along our coast, such as at Demons Bluff, Wye River, Mounts Bay – Marengo Beach area and the Tuxion Road carpark area north of Apollo Bay.

For years, successive generations have visited and holidayed at the coast and visitors have been attracted to the Great Ocean Road's rich flora and fauna, coastal reserves, magnificent geological formations and its laid-back coastal lifestyle. For some time, however, the communities of the Great Ocean Road have voiced their concern as they have seen their beloved coast eaten away. There has been appetite for action and evidence-based knowledge, with the communities seeking to understand the risk factors, the adaptive capacity of the coast, the options for climate mitigation, and the vulnerabilities increasingly in evidence relating to social and legal issues. The four-part webinar series *Climate Change and Coastal Erosion* produced by the fledgling community-based organisation GORCN* (Great Ocean Road Communities Network), held during a series of dates in October and November, targeted these challenging and complex issues and proved very timely. Well over 700 registrations were received, not only from our coastal communities but also well beyond the Great Ocean Road – from Micronesia, India and the UK and beyond. The impacts of climate change, particularly sea-level rise, are increasingly in evidence worldwide.

A range of expert speakers and some of Australia's most distinguished journalists took webinar participants

on a journey that unpacked the environmental, social, legal and economic thinking, evidence and current information associated with the consequences of coastal erosion and climate change.



Webinar 1: explored three local case studies – Anglesea, Wye River and Apollo Bay – with insights and experiences from three community members.

Webinar 2: sought to explore some of the climate science and coastal impacts.

It considered the significant changes to marine and coastal environments, and discussed the latest projections and research into likely coastal impacts.

Webinar 3: looked at some of the social and legal issues that are increasingly pressing for our communities with the potential effect on property prices, tourism visitation and community employment.

Webinar 4: armed with considerable knowledge by the end of Webinar 3 and many questions from the local community, the fourth and final session, billed as 'The Response', provided the agencies and two of the councils that are charged with responsibility for the management of the road, with an opportunity to respond to some of the issues of concern raised by the community during the first three sessions. The response by the agencies was a critical part of the program design and aimed to provide insight into their approach to the management of the road – both the handling of the day-to-day challenges and the complex planning that is underway to ensure future resilience of the road as we enter what is an increasingly volatile era.

Spokesperson for GORCN, Charlotte Allen, (President of AIDA) said:

Interest in the series surpassed our expectations and came from Traditional Owners, local governments from around Australia, multiple government departments, university staff and students, schools, the legal profession, engineers, consultants, and of course many from the community.

The webinar series proved an excellent opportunity for our communities to become more fully informed on this urgent issue for the coast and provided a first-class opportunity for the agencies to speak to their management of such issues and to show how they will work in collaboration in order to deliver an integrated and sustainable approach.

GORCN has warmly thanked the expert series participants – Geoffrey Westcott, Juliet Le Feuvre,

Pete Fillmore, Kathleen McInnes, Daniel Ierodiaconou, David Kennedy, Lauren Rickards, Sonia Graham, and Meredith Gibbs, Jodie Sizer (Great Ocean Road Coast and Parks Authority), DELWP (Elisa Zavadil), Michael Tudball (RRV), Rowan MacKenzie (Surf Coast Shire), Tony McGann (Colac Otway Shire) and the incisive series moderators, Robyn Williams, Gael Jennings and Zoe Daniel.

The webinars are now available for viewing on GORCN's YouTube channel here:

<https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCUpl7dmHF04flSPGLGHaM8Q>

We encourage you to watch or re-watch the very engaging series and to share the link with your friends.

Suzanne Cavanagh

*More on GORCN

The Network was established last year to provide a strong collective voice from the communities along the Great Ocean Road on our shared interests following the principles of environmental sustainability, community benefit and socially responsible tourism.

Current members of the Great Ocean Road Communities Network are:

Anglesea Community Network, Aireys Inlet & District Association, Friends of Lorne, Friends of Point Grey, Geelong Environment Council, Greater Torquay Alliance, Kennett River Association, Otway Forum, Otway Climate Emergency Action Group, Save Anglesea, Skenes Creek Progress Association, Southern Otways Sustainable, Wye River Separation Creek Community Association

Friends of the Hooded Plover – Surf Coast



As of 13 November 2021, we have 8 breeding pairs of Hooded Plovers on the Surf Coast at the moment, and a few young ones from previous seasons close by – sometimes too close for the nesters' liking.

The season got off to a promising start when three nests were discovered in early September at Aireys Inlet and Pt Roadknight. The sites were checked by staff from the Great Ocean Road Authority and

signage and enclosures set up. Volunteers were hopeful, but in the blink of an eye all nests failed, possibly due to stormy weather. The next nest was found in mid-September near the Pole House steps, only to be lost after five days.



Bron Ives

More recently the Moggs Creek birds have laid their first eggs for the season between the Moggs Estuary and Spot car park. They have struggled with really high tides and gale-force winds but have so far managed to keep their eggs safe. Beach walkers and their dogs have been really supportive and are giving the birds and their enclosure a wide berth or turning around if the tide is high. We only had one chick successfully fledge on the Surf Coast last season, at Point Addis; fingers crossed the hoodies will have more success this year.



Bron Ives

Birdlife Australia has issued new *Guidelines for Photographing Beach-nesting Birds* and are asking people not to photograph active nests or chicks as disturbance is one of their biggest threats. Contact Janice Carpenter (janicejohnoz@yahoo.com.au) if you'd like the guidelines or are interested in learning more about becoming a volunteer. Follow Friends of the Hooded Plover Surf Coast on facebook!

Bron Ives

Designing futures for the Great Ocean Road

The tourist road – as we knew it

Everyone reading this newsletter will remember Great Ocean Road tourism as it was before 2019. We remember the annoying summer scourge of the 'three-minute tourist' – the buses and the traffic whizzing past along that road, which can split our town in two during peak season. We remember all those issues of parking and congestion that disrupt the normal movement of community life. We saw the annual struggles of our much-admired local businesses to find enough seasonal workers (and affordable accommodation for them). We encountered the crowded beaches and toilet facilities (and the disrespect that happens when there are no toilets at sites of interest). We surely remember still all those peak-time pressures that came to a community located in a serene place along a national memorial road that once attracted more visitors per year than Uluru and the Great Barrier Reef combined.

Of course, we also remember (particularly during the last years of disruption) the positive aspects of living in a place that attracts visitors; 'positives' that go beyond the contribution tourists make to our local economy: the social interactions, the appreciation of strangers encountering and enjoying what we know to be an ancient history, a landscape, an environment and a pattern of life that deserves to be appreciated. Visitation can create chains of connection, it can enable and enliven our gatherings and festivals; it is an *anti-parochial* force, a replenishing of that essential ingredient of life that is *diversity*.

I say I know that all this is what readers understand not merely because I am reflecting my own thoughts but because this is what four hundred local Aireys folk *told* us in the AIDA survey last year. We all see, from the inside, so many of those elements that generate the great paradox of tourism (so common it could almost be described as universal): it frequently brings the seeds of its own destruction. Places that people love to visit can so easily be (and so often are) loved to death.

The 'new' road (as a destination)

In 2019, the Victorian government declared that this 'national treasure', the 250 kilometres of coastal road and its hinterland and marine environment, should be considered as a single destination and its visitation planned and managed to sustain its existence. The 'great tourism paradox' is reflected in the government's action plan: the Great Ocean Road region, its landscapes, environments, communities, and history, are to be

protected and, at the same time, its contribution to the state's 'visitor economy' has to *grow*. This encapsulates the central challenge for the government's 'strategic framework' to define policy actions and processes of planning and management to achieve Great Ocean Road protection/visitation objectives. The framework is now being developed and is due at the end of 2023.

Of course, the Victorian government has not produced an unusual framing of objectives for the management of significant tourist destinations. How to achieve a sustainable outcome from such intrinsically conflicting desires has spurred decades of tourism policy development and practical experimentation around the world. There are national and international programs dedicated to supporting and promoting sustainable tourism. There is a substantial field of design dedicated to the creation of eco-tourism facilities. There are many comparative studies of different policies designed to deal with 'overcrowding' of tourist destinations. In short, there is so much knowledge that can be called on to guide the Victorian government and the new Great Ocean Road Coast and Parks Authority (GORCAPA) in their foundation work over the next couple of years.

The biggest challenge

However, the complexity of this unusual destination presents *specific* challenges for which there may be at best only a limited field of international experience from which to learn. The Great Ocean Road challenge calls for a truly creative approach to 'thinking outside the boundaries' of tried and tested solution (so often found to be wanting).

Thinking about future possibilities for what tourism/visitation could mean – possibilities that engage with all the challenges of the past and the future – will need to be a central feature of the development of the strategic framework plan. That is a big ask for a government and the newly created Authority, but a successful outcome from such thinking could do more than shape Great Ocean Road tourism, it could become a valuable Victorian 'export', influencing approaches to similarly complex sites elsewhere in the world.

A creative design force

So the *Great Ocean Road Futures* project (www.GreatOceanRoadVoices.com.au) has been established to bring hundreds of Victoria's most creative thinkers to assist government and to work with the road's communities, to develop 'radical ideas, new visions and bold proposals' for the Great Ocean Road's future. Working with the knowledge base of multiple

universities, collaborating widely with experts and community members, this new project adopts a design approach to *reimagining what is possible*, to achieve a truly sustainable future for the Great Ocean Road.

For at least two years (2021–22) four Victorian university design schools (with other participating institutions) will be focusing their post-graduate education and research on this task.

Any sustainable future for this destination will result from the exploration of issues that have economic, cultural, technological, environmental and behavioural dimensions. That requires multi-disciplinary analysis, systems thinking and the visualisation and critique of many possible outcomes. The degree of difficulty of such a task cannot be underestimated. All those factors that need to be aligned are interconnected in complex ways, so they cannot simply be considered in isolation. Such work involves design thinking; it is what **designers** do (whether categorised as architecture, landscape, industrial, environmental, or planning).

Focusing creative design thinking on the future of the Great Ocean Road is a great opportunity for the education and research programs of our design schools in universities. Over the last decade or more design schools around the world have understood the value of orienting their pedagogical and research activities towards emerging social challenges – they have become laboratories for critical innovation. Post-graduates in these schools are usually professionals with years of experience since their first degree. What can be achieved by teams of such post-graduates (undertaking work that contributes to their qualifications) is significant.

Framing futures exploration for the Great Ocean Road

The project's design exploration must take a systems perspective, based on understanding the interconnections between the different dimensions of the task.

As well, a set of conceptual frameworks have been agreed that will guide all design thinking and propositions. Solutions will aim to be:

Regenerative – something beyond 'sustainable', particularly the 'least-worse' framings of that concept

Resilient – giving attention to structures that reduce the possibility of systems collapse after shocks

Participative – involving collaborative, co-design work with relevant communities

Open to Indigenous knowledge traditions – First Nations' stories, their patterns of life, their relationship to Country that has so shaped this landscape (and

which uniquely delineate this tourist destination from all others in the world), should be deeply reflected in the exploration of new possibilities that result from this project.

Supporting scenario planning

All the work for the development of a robust strategic framework, able to guide custodianship and management of this region over the coming decades, must involve the exploration of various future **scenarios** that would shape what would be put in place. (Scenarios involve mapping how areas of change might unfold over time; they are not about predictions.)

Examples of what can be thought of as 'domains of uncertainty' that would have to be considered in the creation of those future scenarios include: the pace and impacts of climate change; climate policies (when should the Great Ocean Road be 'carbon neutral?'); tourism markets and movements; the balance of private and public infrastructure investment; transport technologies (busses, cars, bicycle; electric or fossil-fuel based); approaches to revenue raising; and so on. It is clear, for example, that many of those questions are interdependent; it is also clear that 'understanding what should be planned for' requires a creative mapping of issues that *might* impact on the destination in the future.



The work of the Great Ocean Road Futures project is based on more than a decade of related work on the future of urban communities and cities facing climate change. One of the unexpected values of that work is that the creative exploration of futures is a fertile ground for the development of scenarios. The forerunner project for this one, the international Eco-Acupuncture program (www.ecoacupuncture.com) provided data and a conceptual process that enabled a four-year exploration of scenarios for Australian capital cities, if they set 2040 targets for reducing greenhouse gasses (www.visionsandpathways.com).

It is clear from initial design work carried out this year under the constraints of the pandemic and lockdowns (<https://greatoceanroadvoices.com.au/future-visions/completed-projects/>) that as the work expands next

year its contribution to scenario formation will be even greater. Consider, for a moment, all the implications and issues raised by one university design team as they explored current engineering and historical framing of the Great Ocean Road confronting climate-driven coastal erosion: a future entitled the 'Great Ocean Wall'.

Chris Ryan



AIDA memberships due 1 January 2022

Subs for 2022 are due to be paid on 1 January 2022. An email reminder will be sent before Christmas, but members can renew now if they wish. Those without an email address are encouraged to renew now by cheque or direct deposit: Aireys Inlet & District Association BSB 633-000 Account 1572 531 88. Please add your initial and surname, e.g. A Smith.

Charlotte Allen

The AIDA committee wishes everyone a safe and happy festive season and long summer with family and friends.

