

President's Report 2022

I would like to acknowledge that we are meeting on the traditional lands of the Wadawurrung people and pay my respects to their elders past, present and emerging.

I would also like to recognise that while our concerns today are very local, we must also think of the people of the Ukraine.

Welcome to our Ward Councillor Mike Bodsworth and the Shire's CEO Robyn Seymour. Our other Anglesea Ward Councillor, and Mayor, Libby Stapleton is an apology as is Lorne Ward Councillor Gary Allen. I also welcome Danny O'Brien from the Great Ocean Road Coast and Parks Authority who will give us an update on the Authority's activities following the AGM.

Welcome everyone. The AIDA committee has had another year of Zoom meetings, but we have been busy and productive in pursuing AIDA's overall policy: that is, "to encourage and support the planned use of the region between Eastern View and Urquhart Bluff, together with the adjacent hinterland, in a manner that is sympathetic to the environment and conserves as far as possible the special character of

the area”. Recently the committee started to review AIDA’s policies, aims and objectives to ensure they still accurately reflect the organisation’s priorities and activities. The results of this review will be given to all members before any changes are made.

Our interest in GORCAPA, the Great Ocean Road Coast and Parks Authority’s plans and activities remains very high. Its strategies and impacts on the Great Ocean Road, its communities, tourism and the environment will be significant as it progressively assumes responsibility for all Crown land along the road and in the hinterland as well as introducing uniform new strategies and plans that will apply to the whole Road.

While the AIDA committee remains focussed on the area between Urquhart Bluff and Eastern View, we recognise we must also maintain a strong interest in the whole of the Great Ocean Road. Any plans for tourism or residential developments and other infrastructure along the Road has the potential to have an impact locally – either directly or by setting a precedent that could be followed locally. At the moment there are development plans at Kennett River and Princetown that, we believe, would threaten their local communities

and environment. And, of course, closer to home there is the Eden Project in Anglesea. While this is in its very initial stages of planning there seems to be substantial evidence that allowing Alcoa to continue to pump groundwater to fill the mine void is having serious impacts on the health of the Anglesea River with increased water acidity which has effectively killed all fish life. The AIDA committee will closely follow this distressing situation and all the issues raised by the Eden Project which your committee opposes.

The Great Ocean Road Communities Network, or GORCN, which was an AIDA initiative, has had a very successful year with several new members: more than fifteen community organisations now liaise regularly. Our webinar series on Climate Change and Coastal Erosion attracted more than 700 registrations to each of the four sessions, with interest coming from around Australia as well as overseas. GORCN was extremely grateful for the technical assistance and financial help from the Shire.

We are especially pleased to have commenced regular meetings of our GOR communities' network with the chair of GORCAPA, Libby Meares, and its CEO Jodie Sizer.

The Network members believe that the GOR needs fewer tourists, spread throughout the year, and who take time to enjoy the whole coast and what its hinterland have to offer. In last year's report I mentioned that it would be a lost opportunity if there is a return of the convoys of large buses making the one-day dash to the Twelve Apostles and back. They contribute nothing to the community and are an impost on our resources and environment. I still firmly believe this is the case and we must hope that the GORCAPA's tourism strategy reflects this view. I am optimistic that this is the case.

Reviewing all planning applications to the Shire for our area is a core and essential AIDA activity. When applications are for developments that do not comply with the Shire's planning policies or Neighbourhood Character Overlays AIDA submits an objection. This year we have become very concerned by the number of applications that do not meet the requirements for setbacks from front and side

boundaries. These setbacks are very important as they provide space for vegetation between buildings which serves to soften the built form and maintain the sense that our townships are ‘nestled among the trees’. It is very disappointing to see the Shire’s planning officers allowing these non-compliant applications to proceed. We have raised this issue with the Shire several times this year.

The committee has progressed its plans to apply for our area to be recognised by the International Dark Sky Association as a dark sky community. We are planning to hold a community event in September that will involve some talks and discussion about the importance of the Dark Sky followed by some guided star gazing with the experts. Becoming a recognised Dark Sky destination would have some huge community and environmental benefits. Gaining accreditation is a long process that will take several years and requires support from the community and the Shire. We believe we have this support. Holding the Dark Sky Event in September is dependent on Wi-Fi being available in this Hall and AIDA has applied for a Small Grant from the Shire to assist with paying for the service. The AIDA committee has also offered a small amount of financial assistance to get the NBN

connected. Having the service available in the Hall would be a huge benefit to many of the community groups who use the hall and in any emergency event.

One of the issues that was evident in the community attitude survey that AIDA did last year was that people wanted more opportunities to have their say and be consulted. We took this on board and recently held a survey on Safely Sharing our Roads. The results will be available on the AID website. One of the most pleasing results is that there is strong support to reduce the speed limits through and around our communities.

This year the AIDA committee has continued to lobby the Department of Transport and Council for a speed limit reduction from 60 to 50 kph on the GOR through Aireys Inlet and Fairhaven. Not only are we the only communities along the Road that has the 60 kph speed limit through them but Aireys is also the only township along the Road that it bi-sects. We are also lobbying to have the speed limit on all the townships' local roads reduced to 40 kph – as is the case in the Lighthouse Precinct. The Shire will review the local roads speed

limit and supports AIDA's advocacy for a speed reduction on the GOR through the built-up areas.

The AIDA committee put in submissions to the Shire's review of its Community Amenity Local Law as well as its Safer Cycling and Road Safety Strategies. The results from AIDA's Safely Sharing our Roads survey were provided for the Road Safety Strategy review.

At the end of last year AIDA had almost 500 members, the highest number in AIDA's long history. Thanks to the strong membership and the generous donations from many of our members, we have a healthy bank balance and have been able to give back to the community. This year we have given the wonderful Rubbish Rangers some additional funds for more Hi-Viz vests and equipment. We also donated \$1000 to the local Hooded Plover group so they could purchase A-Frame metal signs to ask the public and dog owners to avoid the nesting plovers. These were placed at the walkways to local beaches where the plovers were nesting. We also donated a wonderful 1965 aerial photo of Aireys Inlet to the Hall committee which had it reframed and have hung it in the foyer.

The VCAT appeal over the Council's refusal to approve an application for a private bridge over the Painkalac Creek was heard in June last year. The Tribunal's decision was handed down in late October and approved the issuing of a planning permit. However, the Tribunal members were very clear that their decision was made purely on planning matters and that the applicants would also need a licence or lease agreement from Council to allow construction of the bridge on Crown land and Council reserves. The AIDA committee believes that the Council has no legal authority to grant such a permit and has written to the Shire detailing our concerns. A decision about the granting of this licence has yet to be made.

Despite all the Zoom meetings again this year the AIDA committee has continued to be an effective advocate for our area. My personal thanks to them all for their hard work and support.

This year there are five committee members who are not re-nominating for the AIDA committee this year for a variety of personal reasons. Our thanks go to Suzanne Cavanagh, Annette Comte, Leah Gaylard, Martin Gehrckens, and Catherine McNaughton for all they

have contributed over their years on the committee. They will be missed. But we are delighted that Barb Fletcher is back after a year's break and that Jacqui Lamont and Helen Berthlesen are joining us. We look forward to other AIDA members stepping forward to join us in our important but enjoyable committee work.

Once again thanks to Lecki Ord for all she does as membership secretary and to Nan McNab for presenting AIDA so professionally with the production of our newsletters.

Our area is fortunate to have had AIDA advocating for this area for well over 50 years. Our communities have all benefited from the efforts and time of so many people over the years and the departing committee members have all played their part.

Finally, we are grateful for the accessibility, local knowledge and commitment of our local councillors, Mike Bodsworth, Gary Allen and our mayor Libby Stapleton as well as the Shire CEO, Robyn Seymour. This is true as well of the chair of the Great Ocean Road Coast and Parks Authority, Libby Meares, and its CEO Jodie Sizer.

The values we share with these officeholders gives us confidence that

we can work successfully together to be good custodians of this special part of the world.