

# President's Report for 2002

## Tim Gibson's President's Report for 2002 – from March 2003 AIDA Newsletter

Again it is my privilege to present to you a report on AIDIs activities for last year. Throughout 2002 your committee has been working hard on behalf of the community in the Aireys Inlet region, with our overriding concern being the preservation of the coastal village character of our much-loved township. But last year your committee has tried to add some more proactive functions to our range of activities, so that we can pursue ways of directly improving the lifestyles of Aireys residents and visitors, in addition to our role in working to improve proposed inappropriate urban-style multi-unit developments.

Two of our newer committee members, Geoff Brown and Rod Woodger, have been largely responsible for this shift in our view of AIDA's role. Geoff proposed that we should run an AIDA Workshop, to discuss future priorities for our activities. This Workshop was held successfully on 4 November, with Geoff acting as facilitator. As he is to present a report on the Workshop later this evening, I shall leave it to him to present the results of our discussions.

Thanks to the creative thinking and enthusiasm of Rod Woodger, your committee has been sponsoring the idea of establishing a new housing development – primarily for elderly local residents – on the Council-owned land off Albert Avenue. The Shire provided a grant to develop a preliminary plan for this much-needed project; a plan was then prepared by Span Architects. Rod will be speaking about this important initiative later this evening, and there will be an opportunity for anyone interested to ask questions, or make comments.

In my previous two annual reports, I have had to refer to the valuable contributions made to the work of AIDA by long-serving committee members who were retiring. This year, I am happy to say, all of our long-serving members have re-nominated for committee positions. And it looks as if we shall be gaining the services of some new and talented individuals, which augurs well for the future of AIDA, as we seek to keep up with the changing needs of the changing Aireys community. We are certainly hoping that their impact will be as positive as that of Geoff and Rod.

And there are some positive developments coming up that should help the 2003 committee in its endeavours. Firstly, the Shire is at last getting round to setting

up a Neighbourhood Character Study for the Aireys Inlet district. This long-awaited project will give AIDA, and the whole Aireys region community, a clear set of 'baseline' parameters which can be used in establishing arguments promoting retention of our existing 'coastal village' character, rather than importing urban-style infrastructure and values. Our ward councillors have, as usual, been invited to speak to us this evening, and no doubt they will put us in the picture in relation to this important initiative.

Another positive development for our area is the progress that the FAIRGO committee is making in their search for a site for a recreation ground for Aireys Inlet. This committee, which has a widely-based membership of community members (including Geoff Brown and myself as representatives of AIDA) has worked hard, and, as a result, there are now definite glimmers of hope that a resolution of this long-running, and often divisive, issue is in sight. Much of the credit for the progress made by the FAIRGO committee must go to its hard-working and enterprising chairman, Adrian Kennelly. As Adrian will be making a brief address to us later this evening, I will leave it to him to outline the possibilities for such a resolution.

During 2002 there have of course been a number of planning issues relating to proposed developments in the Aireys Inlet area which, we felt, required participation by AIDA in the planning process. One of the more important of these related to the vacant block at 18-20 Philip Street, where the same developer who won permission to erect nine two-storey dwellings at 52-54 Great Ocean Road now proposes a similar development. AIDA joined with many individual community members in opposing the nature of this proposal, and we are awaiting VCAT's final decision on this issue. Perhaps even more important will be VCAT's final decision relating to the proposed 47 lot subdivision of the land at 15 Bimbadeen Drive, Fairhaven – land that is currently occupied by ironbark forest. The VCAT hearing on this matter will be held early in February. AIDA has strongly opposed this proposed development, and we have supported a group of neighbouring residents in their active and well-researched opposition.

Among those planning issues which were decided in 2002, we (together with other organisations and individuals) were able to achieve at least partial modification of the original proposals in a number of cases – notably those at 310 and 315 Great Ocean Road, Fairhaven, and at 2 and 4 Yandanah Road, Fairhaven. These successes, even if minor, justify the tremendous amount of time and effort that your committee puts into preparing the cases which we present to the Shire's Planning Committee, the Council itself, or to VCAT. In this respect I would like to pay tribute to the great contribution that Barbara

Leavesley, in particular, made in 2002, often with considerable assistance from Elaine Grose. It was these two who often undertook the bulk of the work involved in preparing and presenting our submissions.

A number of other issues have, of course, come before your committee in 2002. Russell Hansen, our indefatigable Treasurer, somehow found the time to continue coordinating our efforts to clean up the verges of the Great Ocean Road through the township. Once again, though, the numbers turning up to help in this endeavour have been disappointing – we hope more community members will turn out in 2003. Geoff Brown and Guy Tuddenham have continued their researches into developing a policy on external lighting in Aireys, and indeed one which the Council might adopt for the whole of the Shire – this task is close to completion. Brian Williams has written an (unfortunately expurgated!) history of AIDA, which is a most interesting read, and which we shall be publishing early this year. We received a grant from the Shire for another publishing venture – reissuing our Aireys Inlet pamphlet, complete with a street map, essential phone numbers, and a brief history of the area. This project should also be completed soon. And there have been numerous other minor matters that have required our attention.

I can assure you that your committee has worked hard in dealing with this broad range of issues, and I am sure that you will join with me in showing your appreciation of their efforts on your behalf.