

# President's Report for 2009

## **Barbara Fletcher's President's Report for 2009**

A recent statement by someone much respected in this community that "AIDA is one of those groups worth bottling" has given rise to much thought over the past months. To be actively involved in local matters, in a local organisation such as AIDA, can sometimes appear just as a continuum of issues stretching from the past, and then ever onward into the future. Although this makes for interesting times for Committee members, it also means we need to be constantly vigilant to keep ahead of issues. But those words "worth bottling" gave great validity to these efforts, and reinforced community confidence in AIDA as a local community representative. We will continue to pursue our aims and objectives to maintain heritage in this unique and lovely area.

We have a number of areas to report on which have been of importance in 2009 – many have been ongoing, and some will require further action throughout 2010.

### **Split Point Lighthouse Precinct**

This long running issue appeared to be coming to resolution, with Councillors and staff taking time to listen to concerns of residents as to the impact of excessive traffic and tourist numbers in the area, and making sensible decisions based on these concerns. Our expectation was for action to actually follow up these decisions, but the process appears to have slowed considerably. The proposed traffic management plan was dependent on traffic flow information being collected by consultants during peak periods. Money was set aside in the July Council Budget and it was anticipated that we would see a traffic count this summer. So far we

### **Aireys Inlet Citizens Jury Precinct 2**

This Jury met in November 2008 and reconvened in June 2009 at the jurors request to consider Council costing of their recommendations. This process has been detailed in the September 2009 Newsletter, but, in brief, there were points of difference in the recommendations of the Jury, and those put to Council by the council officers. A Resolution put to Council by two local Councillors sought further community feedback on the issue by way of a Hearings Committee. We are however concerned that although the intent of this Resolution was to further

the consultative process, there is a chance that it may deliver outcomes which are outside those of the Citizens Jury and thus will actually reduce the authority of the consultative process. We are also interested to see the methodology proposed to assess and implement the two or more possible results.

### **Urban Design Guidelines (for the Top and Bottom Shopping Precincts)**

AIDA welcomed and participated in this very well run, community consultative process, which will deliver guidelines to cover and protect future development in the Top and Bottom Shops. These guidelines contain reference to building scale, siting and setbacks, streetscape, form and features, materials, landscape and public spaces. The Guidelines are currently before the Planning Minister and it is expected they will come into effect in early 2010. Prior to this, Council anticipates these regulations to be used in assessment of any proposal for these two areas.

### **Surf Coast Sustainable Design Guidelines**

Recently, by sheer luck, one of the Committee members came across a Council proposal to supersede the "Surf Coast Style" and "Surf Coast Design" Guidelines with a new pack to be known as "Surf Coast Sustainable Design Guidelines." This had been put together by a consultancy (Parsons Brinckerhoff and formulated with input from local builders and architects. AIDA is extremely disappointed in the draft document, which, although very glossy, has some glaring omissions. These include lack of reference to local Overlays, no indication that new fire provisions apply to new development, lack of clarity as to its statutory basis, and "suggestions" for certain building design outcomes which are actually a requirement under building overlays. We have submitted our response to the Planning Officer, also stating our disappointment in the non-inclusive process which has been a glaring departure from Councils recent practices. We are hoping for a meeting to discuss all issues in the near future.

### **Planning**

As noted in the last President's Report, there is a new planning team at AIDA" and a very steep learning curve it has been for the two newcomers. As always, we are reliant on input from local residents, and it has been extremely pleasing that locals are contacting us both for advice and to notify us of planning issues. Specific applications have been documented in the Newsletters, but perhaps mention should be made of one in particular.

This is the proposal to build behind the Top Shops, and to seek a waiver on parking requirements for individual residences. Council called in this application, discussed the problems and deemed the application as inappropriate for the area. The applicant took the matter to VCAT and we were horrified when, in his judgement, the Presiding Member not only let the application through, but actually set down that private long term parking was appropriate in the parking area in front of the shops, and that this would not be a problem to those seeking short term parking. In theory, these 1 to 3 bedroom duplexes could put additional 8 to 10 cars in the spaces for any time they wish.

We have since received notice of the same proposal with the same parking waiver for the Bottom Shop area, where there appears to be no shortage of space to house vehicles.

We are continually being challenged by some developers who push the boundaries of the Neighbourhood Character Overlay – the old “it applies to everyone else, but not me” scenario. We have something special and unspoilt in this area, very different to most coastal towns, and need to be aware of the special provisions which protect that uniqueness. Please continue to contact us if you have any concerns, or want advice as to the appropriateness of certain proposals. Our phone numbers are in the Newsletter and at the General Store in the AIDA bulletin board.

We have noted already the appointment of our new Mayor, Cr Libby Coker, and wish to congratulate her on this appointment. We look forward to working with her with the same ease and inclusiveness we have had with her predecessor, and wish her well in the role.

It was interesting to read last years report and see our visions for 2009, for they are the same this year. Our local survey/questionnaire which has in the past provided us with very useful, across the community information, has been discussed in many meetings, but remains stalled due to State privacy laws which limit our access to addresses of residents in the region. And we will pursue the Older Persons Housing Scheme – which is not only of extreme importance to the area, but is becoming more relevant as the years progress!

On behalf of the Committee, I would again like to thank Dot Leslie for her excellent production of our Newsletter, to Kim Neubecker for her input and expertise in the Citizens Jury process, to Jane Grant for her time and input to the Urban Design Guideline Steering Committees and to Dennis Leavesley for his representation on the now wound up Painkalac Estuary Plan Implementation

Committee. And finally, to farewell with sadness Tim Gibson from our Committee. Tim and Ros have been tireless in their community involvement, but have now left the area. Tim has served on the AIDA Committee for 10 years, three as President, one as Treasurer and six as Membership Officer. We will miss his wisdom and knowledge at our meetings.

Which brings me very neatly to the next thank you, and of course, perhaps the most important – to the Committee members. It has been a pleasure to preside over this “mob” and the work, intelligence and good humour each has brought to the meetings has made this busy committee an excitement and pleasure to be part of.

We will be calling for nominations later, so if there is anyone wishing to join us at the committee level, please feel free to submit your name. And please also feel free to put forward any questions, either at the meeting, or by contact with committee members.

And before I close, there needs to be acknowledgement of the terrible tragedy of the Black Saturday bushfires, and the impact of these on our community. Each of us is now more fire aware, and has designed a fire plan practical to our individual circumstances. We have pared down the valuables, and have the emergency pack ready at hand. Our bushland has changed with cold burns and undergrowth clearance. We have made contingency plans to cancel meetings if the fire danger rating is above a certain level. I therefore look forward to our guest speaker, Beth Davidson, for reinforcement of our preparations and helpful advice for the coming summer months.