

# President's Report for 2013

**Presented by Barbara Fletcher at the AGM on April 20th 2014**

Today, one of the important, but also legislatively required agenda items, is the acceptance by this forum of the so-called Model Rules, which we will be explaining in detail later, this is going to be a very short president's report. Most issues have been covered in detail in our newsletters and are regularly updated on the AIDA website, but the intention will be to publish a full summary of events in forthcoming publications.

One of the more satisfying achievements of the year was the professional cataloguing and storage of our records. As long-time members will be aware, one of the ongoing issues for AIDA has been that these documents are not only an important historical reference in charting the development of a community and a community group, but also a record of issues affecting the local area for a period extending over nearly fifty years. We were fortunate that one of our committee was able to arrange for a Masters student, Elizabeth, to archive our material. Elizabeth spent her holidays cataloguing and was paid appropriately for this mammoth task. AIDA records from as far back as the 1960s are now indexed in series, grouped thematically and registered in an Excel-based tool designed specifically for community organisations by Melbourne University. Best of all, when we approached the Geelong Historical Society and requested professional storage, citing historical importance and research potential, we gained space for our twenty boxes for the foreseeable future and with the probability of storage for future material when the Society moves into its new premises next year. This has ensured not only the safety of our records but has freed up space in homes throughout Victoria.

We have in the past been fortunate with the accessibility of our local councillors, and this has continued with our two local members Margot Smith and Libby Coker, both of whom have given their time again today. They have met with us, listened and acted where possible on the issues of concern to AIDA and we thank them for their support. I would also like to thank our mayor, Rose Hodge, who is unable to be present tonight, for her open door when meetings are needed. Unfortunately the introduction of boundaries into the shire has, as we feared, given rise to individual councillor responsibility for individual areas even though voting at council meetings is still en bloc and decisions arising from these considerations impact on the whole shire. I must add our disappointment that although written invitations were extended to all councillors to attend the AGM

and/or the community forum, the only responses received were from our local representatives and mayor.

A potted version of AIDA activities since our last AGM is necessary today and must include:

- submissions made to the state government on the proposed Residential Zones and Vic Smart Planning Permit Process; upgraded features and improved accessibility to the AIDA web page; refreshed, upgraded and new AIDA handout material;
- appearances at VCAT to support Surf Coast Shire against inappropriate development, sometimes with success but sometimes scratching our heads at the baffling decisions of the tribunal; continuing to meet with council officers to discuss local issues including older persons housing, car parking, roads, drainage and footpaths, fencing and signage, and on proposed changes to local rules and regulations.

We have sent out bulletins to members via email and the website when speedy action is required and interacted with members on important issues. We are looking soon to implement an on-line Survey Monkey tool to properly gauge the views of you, our members, and so give us the proper data to act on your behalf.

We have sent representatives to GORCC meetings, local fire-action groups and council briefings. Our membership continues to rise and this strong community support gives AIDA a unique ability to speak on behalf of this very special area.

I did say this would be short, but I must now say some thankyou's. To Nan McNab our newsletter editor, who gives of her very busy time freely and with an efficiency that has been invaluable, shown itself in the standard of our newsletter, and is so appreciated.

To the AIDA committee: I spoke last year of the talent, hard work and commitment of this group and again this needs to be recognised. Each committee member commits freely their time and individual expertise and the professionalism of output is seen in the respect in which AIDA is held at all levels in the local area.

And one very sad thankyou – Barbara Leavesley has decided it is time to hang up the boots and leave the committee. To say that she has been a member of the AIDA committee for fourteen years, and that in that time has held the offices of

assistant secretary, secretary, vice president and president as well as committee member would do no justice to the work she has put in on behalf of AIDA. Barbara has been the pivot and mainstay of the group, travelling to evening council meetings and briefings, and haranguing officers and councillors when the need arose. She has been the person locals have come to for advice and has a deep knowledge of issues admirable in someone half her age. She has spent an inordinate amount of time being the historian and advocate for both AIDA and Aireys Inlet and she will be a real loss to the committee. Barbara, on behalf of the committee and members, please accept our profound thanks and accept this gift – we hope you will buy something to remind you of the collective us of all those years.

***Barbara Fletcher***