



AIDA

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



Annual general meeting

This edition of AIDA's newsletter is to report on the AGM, which was held on 9 April and was attended by about forty AIDA members and others from the community.

We were pleased to welcome our Ward Councillor Margot Smith and the shire's CEO Keith Baillie to the meeting. Mayor Rose Hodge and Cr Libby Coker sent apologies.

Keith Baillie gave a very informative talk on a range of items on which the council is currently working, including how to identify and assist vulnerable people in communities such as Aireys Inlet. He also spoke briefly about issues such as the Fairhaven underpass and the Bottom Shops pedestrian crossing. His talk was followed by questions from the floor.

The President's Report and some information about community interest in purchasing the Painkalac Valley land followed, and is included in this newsletter. The meeting then moved to accept the financial report and the election of the committee members. Everyone on last year's committee renominated and the office bearers remain unchanged for 2016–17. We were pleased to accept the nomination from Gretel Lamont who has now joined your committee.

AIDA president's report

I would like to acknowledge that we are meeting on Wadawurrung land and pay my respects to their elders both past and present.

It gives me great pleasure to present the President's Report.

I would first like to welcome our Ward Councillor Margot Smith as well as the shire's CEO Keith Baillie and thank them for giving us their Saturday afternoon. Your interest and support of AIDA is much appreciated. The Mayor, Rose Hodge and Cr Libby Coker were also invited but sent apologies.

It's terrific to see so many AIDA members here today and others from the community and a special welcome to past committee members and presidents. When I agreed to take this on a year ago I don't think I realised how time-consuming it would be and I am full of admiration for the immediate past president Barb Fletcher who did the job for six years.

This has been a busy year with the review of the Eastern View to Aireys Inlet Structure Plan as well as other issues that have occupied much of the committee's time. Much has been achieved but the year had its disappointments.

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The major disappointment, of course, is the aesthetics and 24-hour visual intrusion of the underpass at Fairhaven. It was a real failure in the project's planning that AIDA and the wider community were not consulted and able to have a say about the design of the underpass and the related parking changes.

It has been my experience that involving the community and its local knowledge in projects and issues that affect them, no matter what size, leads to better, accepted and agreed outcomes, often at a reduced cost.

AIDA's issue with the underpass has nothing to do with its function to provide a safer crossing of the Great Ocean Road at this particular point for those who choose to use it.

Like many AIDA members, and others in the community, the committee is extremely disappointed to see this inappropriate and very suburban structure, with its concrete wall, stretches of intrusive safety fencing, lights and sealed and marked car park, in the coastal landscape that the community has worked so hard to protect for over 50 years.

It is also really disappointing that nobody involved in designing the underpass recognised and understood its major impact on our shared coastal landscape and didn't see the need for wide community involvement in the planning process.

It is concerning that a construction project of the size of the underpass, in a sensitive and critical location, did not trigger a planning or approval process from any of the government and land management authorities involved.

I think the authorities and the community need to understand how this happened. Did the existing approval processes fail, were they not adhered to or do they need strengthening so nothing like this can happen again?

We also need to understand whether the project's planning included any reference to applicable policies and guidelines for our area's low-key coastal character, such as the Victorian Coastal Council's Guidelines for Structures on the Coast. And if not, why not? It seems to me that had these been applied there would have been a different outcome.

We all must now work with VicRoads, the shire and the surf club to see what can be done to reduce the underpass's impact on the landscape. Photomontages of some colour and fencing options are on display in the hall today and I would encourage everyone to look at these and provide their feedback to VicRoads. If anyone has other suggestions these can be noted as well.

Another disappointment is that the area missed out on the first round of funding under the Federal Government's Mobile Phone Black Spots program. Adequate mobile phone services are an essential service in our fire-prone area, particularly over summer. The area has been nominated in the second round of funding and we are hopeful of success.



Your committee has also been working with the shire on the pedestrian refuge at the Bottom Shops. A safer crossing of the Great Ocean Road at this point is needed but we have been concerned that the proposed location, well to the west of the Bottom Shops, will mean few people will choose to use it.

VicRoads has also proposed some works at the entrance to Inlet Crescent which are not related to the pedestrian refuge but would significantly increase the area of sealed road in this location as well as requiring the removal of much of the vegetation that screens the car park, playground and skate park from the Great Ocean Road. We are pleased that the shire is planning some broader community consultation about these plans.

The updated Eastern View to Aireys Inlet Structure Plan articulates the principles for planning for our area for the next twenty years. It is probably the key planning document AIDA will need to spend time reviewing for years to come and the committee spent many hours considering and discussing the draft plans.

The review started in early 2015 and ended when the shire adopted the plan in November. In between there was a lot of hard work by the shire and its consultants as well as the AIDA committee.

We had meetings and discussions with the

shire's planning department and put in lengthy and comprehensive comments on the draft plan and then the final plan when it was put out for comment. I thank Ian Godfrey, Gary Johnson and Barb Fletcher in particular for the many hours they committed to the structure plan and urban design framework.

While the AIDA committee does not agree with everything in the plan we think it reflects the collective values of the wider community and the results of our recent opinion surveys.

Most of the issues and suggested changes raised by AIDA were accepted and for the few that were not the shire's planning officer provided us with clear explanations of his reasons. While the review of the structure plan required much of the committee, we would like to thank the shire's staff for their professionalism and willingness to work constructively with us.

As well as the significant time required by the Structure Plan review we made submissions to the shire's review of its Open Spaces Plan and the proposed environmental overlay changes. These reviews are time-consuming for a voluntary organisation and there was a period in the middle of the year when the committee was very stretched, but it is important that AIDA's views are considered and included during policy development.

We would also like to acknowledge the willingness of the shire's engineering services to review its use of herbicide after we raised concerns that it was resulting in increasing areas of bald earth in our public spaces, around trees, fences and bollards, along pathways, drains and roadsides. Herbicide is no longer being used and we are enjoying watching the grass grow and look forward to some planting around the swale drains and mulching around the trees.

When I looked back over the last twelve months I was surprised by the number of issues that came up through the year as well as what comes to the committee from our routine review of the council meeting agendas and all planning applications for our area.



Members of the committee are also busy in other areas and this year we represented AIDA's views on the Painkalac Reservoir Community and Agency Group, which considered future recreational uses of the reservoir. We are also involved with the ongoing review of the issues at the Memorial Arch.

Last year AIDA celebrated its fiftieth anniversary and the year was wrapped up with an event at the pub. From modest beginnings to stop a caravan park being developed on the land beside the Inlet, AIDA has become a large, strong and effective community organisation.

From time to time we are reminded that there are those who understand AIDA only as an association that 'stops things'. I think we need to be very clear about AIDA's purpose.

The area from Eastern View to Aireys Inlet is continually changing and developing. More and larger houses are being built, new infrastructure proposals come up and increasing numbers of tourists are visiting.

As this change happens it is AIDA's objective to make sure, as far as is practically possible, that the low-key coastal village nature of our 'walking' community is maintained and the night sky is protected. I like to think that rather than 'stopping things' AIDA is an association that says 'yes' to what's special about this area and sometimes this does mean saying 'no'.

I would argue that without AIDA saying 'yes' for fifty years this area would be a very different place.

It is wonderful that support for AIDA continues to be strong and to grow. It is you, as individual AIDA members, who give this association a voice and the ability to lobby on your behalf. The stronger the membership base, the more capacity AIDA has to advocate, so please, if you have friends or neighbours who agree with AIDA's aims, encourage them to become members.

I will finish with some thanks, first to Nan McNab for giving our newsletters her professional touch.

My special thanks must go to the members of the AIDA committee for all their work between our monthly meetings. While it has been a full year we've enjoyed a lot of good times and laughter. Each and every one of the committee members has been committed and engaged and I thank them for all the hard work on your behalf and for the support they have given me over the year.

Everyone's dedication and willingness to volunteer their time and expertise is impressive and this community is fortunate to have them.

Charlotte Allen, President 9 April 2016



Community interest and the Painkalac Valley

The Painkalac Valley is a defining feature of this part of the Great Ocean Road and love for the valley is something that unites this community.

Since 1983, AIDA has surveyed the attitudes of its members and other residents. The most recent survey, in 2015, was consistent with earlier surveys showing the deep attachment respondents have to the Painkalac Valley and their clear opposition (over 75%) to built development on it.

As you will know, the privately owned valley land has been actively marketed over the past six months and this has raised concerns for some AIDA members and the committee as they wonder what this might mean.

Given the community's passion for the valley, we started thinking about whether it would be possible for it to be brought into public ownership and over the past few months the AIDA committee has been exploring whether this could be achieved through a public fundraising campaign.

We have discussed the idea with ANGAIR, Trust for Nature, the shire and others, as well as with some people in the community.

Given this talk, some of you may have heard that there is community interest in fundraising to purchase the Painkalac Valley land to hold it in public ownership.

The aim would be to protect its values in perpetuity and to progressively return its wetlands to their natural state, as has been achieved for the neighbouring Painkalac Nature Reserve, which was grazed until 1972.

This would need to be a broad-based community campaign, and over the past few weeks members of the AIDA and ANGAIR committees have been meeting to discuss the concept and the complexity of issues this raises. There are legal and financial challenges. There is much we need to learn and we want to understand the needs of its current use for the agistment of horses.

The issues are challenging and complex and we haven't yet had any meaningful discussions with the owner.

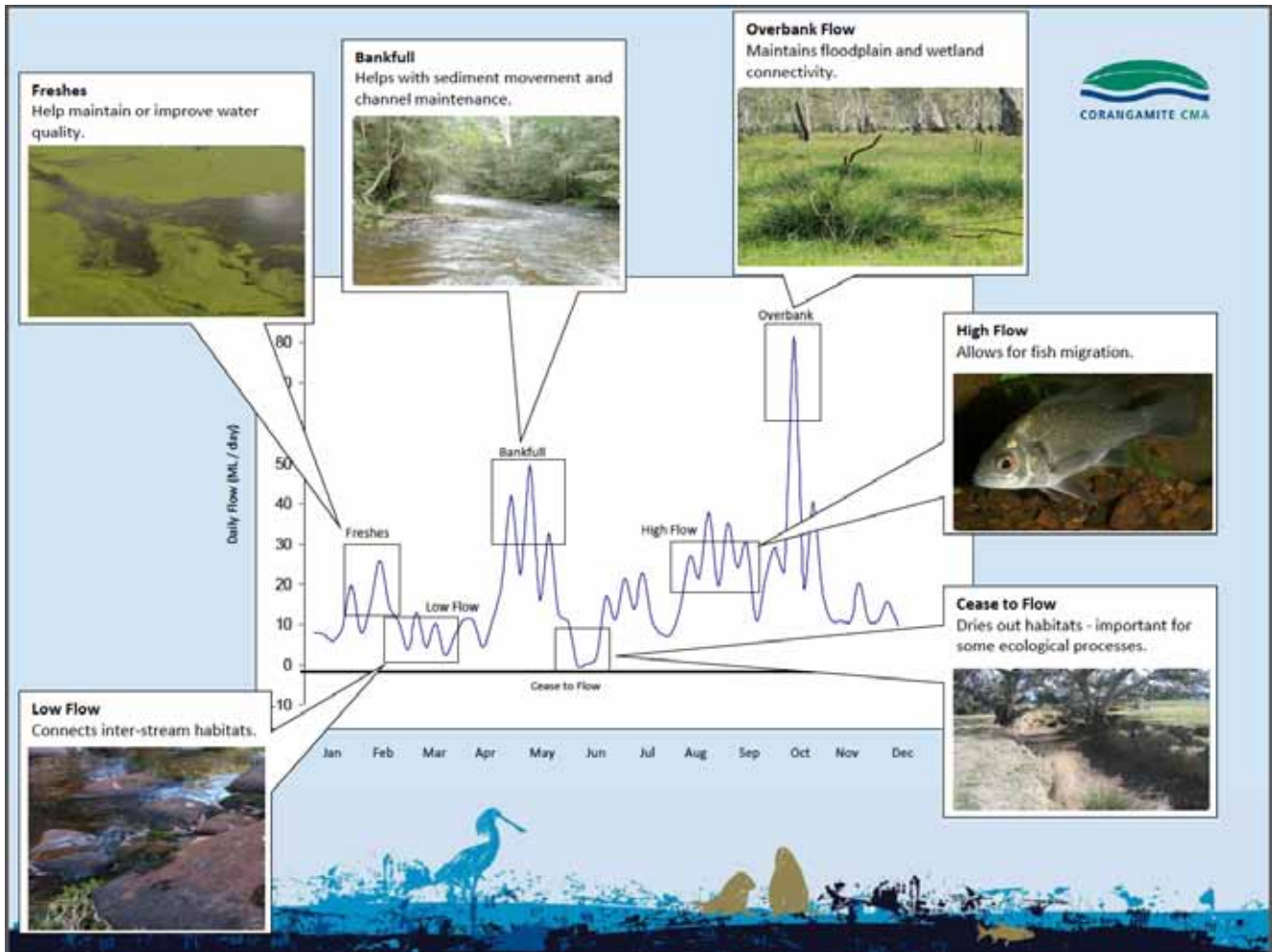
However, the idea needs to be more widely known so it can be discussed and progressed – should this be possible. While all those involved to date are enthusiastic, we recognise we might not succeed.

At this stage AIDA and ANGAIR have agreed that the best way to carry the idea forward is a new group that invites involvement from the wider community. They have suggested this will be called The Painkalac Project.

Hopefully, more will be known over the next few months as the discussions continue and you will be kept informed.

For more information, contact Janice Carpenter: janicejohnoz@yahoo.com.au or Roger Ganly: rganly8@bigpond.com

Painkalac Creek forum



An excellent and informative forum about the management of the Painkalac Creek, its estuary and water flows followed the AGM.

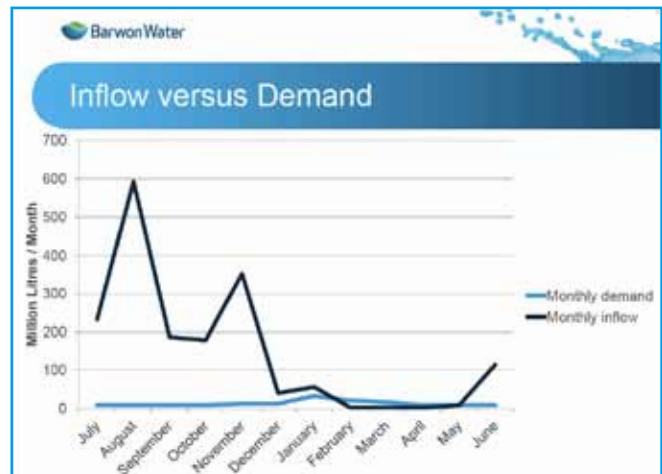
In a few months the Painkalac Reservoir will no longer be used to supply water to the townships of Aireys Inlet and Fairhaven and the forum explored issues such as what this means for the future recreational uses of the reservoir, management of the dam water levels, the impact on water flows down the creek, the health of the estuary and how the decision is made to open the mouth.

Barwon Water and the Corangamite Catchment Management Authority (CCMA) explained in detail the complexity and importance of environmental flows down the creek. This includes periods of cease-to-low and low flows, high flows, bankfull and overbank or flooding flows. The two authorities also explained how they are working together to agree on the management of environmental flows once the reservoir is no longer used for water supply and how these are based on environmental flow studies.

Barwon Water's presentation included the following graph which shows just how little of the inflow into the reservoir is used for the Aireys Inlet and

Images courtesy Corangamite CMA (above) and Barwon Water (below). Note: graph is not specific to the Painkalac Creek, but designed to show the different flow components.

Fairhaven water supply. This means that while there will be more flexibility to use the reservoir to replicate environmental flows once it's no longer used for water supplies, there will only be a small increase in the volume of water released into the creek.



There was also a very interesting and detailed explanation by the Surf Coast Shire and the CCMA about the complexities of the Estuary Entrance Management Support System. This is a decision-making tool used by CCMA to help inform the Council whether to artificially open the mouth. Deakin University developed the system with technical support.

The presenters were Barwon Water's Operations Manager, Shaun Cumming; the Corangamite Catchment Management Authority's Strategy and Planning Manager, Jayden Woolley; and the Surf Coast Shire's Manager of Environment and Community Safety, Rowan MacKenzie. Libby Mears moderated the session.



AIDA committee 2016–17

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To keep up to date with AIDA's activities go to:

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