



AIDA

Urquart Bluff • Aireys Inlet • Fairhaven • Moggs Creek • Eastern View
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President's report April 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members will be aware, one of the ongoing issues for AIDA has been that these documents are not only an important historical reference in charting the development of a community and a community group, but also a record of issues affecting the local area for a period extending over nearly fifty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 thank-yous. 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 thank-you – 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



Barbara Leavesley, left, with Barbara Fletcher

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

Community Forum 2014 Connecting Aireys and beyond

Following the AGM a community forum was held, chaired by former shire councillor and mayor Libby Mears. Speakers from the Fairhaven Lifesaving Club (Paul Shannon), the Tourism and Traders Association (David and Anne Dansick) and the Community Garden (Terrence Hoffman) shared the great work of their organisations. Questions were invited from the audience.

Light refreshments were served by AIDA at the conclusion of the forum, which was judged to be a great success worthy of repeating at next year's AGM. Speakers from other local community groups will be invited to participate.

AIDA's new rules (previously known as its constitution)

In 2012 state parliament passed the *Associations Incorporation Reform Act 2012*, replacing the Act of 1981. The government has proposed new Model Rules conforming with the Act. These govern the operational and financial provisions to be followed by all not-for-profit associations. The Model Rules are very similar in scope to AIDA's existing constitution except that they strengthen accountability and add provisions to protect the rights of members.

At the AGM in April the AIDA committee recommended that we adopt the new Model Rules in their entirety, with the exception that 'a member' should be added to those to whom the committee may delegate responsibilities – in addition to 'a member of the committee, a subcommittee, or staff' as in the Model Rules. This is designed to give future committees greater flexibility.

The Act also requires that the rules now include a statement of purpose of the association whereas the previous Act did not provide for this. Our new statement of purpose, based on AIDA's existing Policy and Aims pamphlet is:

- to encourage and support the planned use of the

region between Urquhart Bluff and Eastern View, 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

- to ensure environmentally sensitive use of the area as a coastal and rural resort or haven that retains its unique charm.

The motion 'that the Aireys Inlet and District Association adopt new rules under the *Associations Incorporation Reform Act 2012*, in accordance with the Model Rules provided by the Government – with the discretionary text required in Model Rules 1, 2, and 3 and a proposed change to Model Rule 43 as highlighted in the document circulated at the meeting' was passed unanimously.

AIDA's new rules do not significantly affect the way it operates. We are able to retain our policy of each family or household membership carrying two votes at an AGM. But there are more detailed provisions for the process of becoming and remaining a member and membership lapses if dues are not paid for one year.

If needed, there are clear procedures for special general meetings, removal of members and so on. The committee may now decide to allow the use of new technologies to enable participation at meetings by members who cannot be present.

AIDA'S new rules were approved by the government on 22 May 2014. You can view the rules on AIDA's website at <http://www.aireys-inlet.org/aidas-new-rules/>

Fire hazard reduction and view improvement

In a joint initiative of the Surf Coast Shire and VicRoads to reduce the fire hazard, woody weeds on both sides of the Great Ocean Road between Lialeeta Road and the Mad Max House in Fairhaven have been cut down. This project aims to reduce the fuel load adjacent to this major road and enhance the survival of people in cars trapped on the Great Ocean Road. A significant bonus, but not an aim of the project, was the improved view of the landscape from the Great Ocean Road down the Painkalac estuary. Compare photos 1 and 3. Parts of other major roads that are important for access and egress during a fire may receive a similar fuel reduction.

AIDA encourages use of this approach on the sides of the Great Ocean Road. The section of Great Ocean Road between O'Donohue Road, Anglesea, and Urquhart Bluff would benefit if similarly treated, as would other parts of the Great Ocean Road including the zone from the Mad Max House to Moggs Creek. Much of the vegetation inhibiting the view here are woody weeds that are both flammable and conceal views.



Tea trees dominating the view from the Great Ocean Road looking east towards the Painkalac estuary



Cutting and removing woody weeds with the aid of a knuckle boom machine (Mad Max house in background)



View of Painkalac estuary after the tea tree was removed

Gary Johnson

Aireys Inlet to Eastern View structure plan

A new structure plan is to be developed for the Aireys Inlet to Eastern View area in the next year. A structure plan guides the overall development of each community's section of the planning scheme, along with any necessary or desirable changes. The last Aireys Inlet structure plan was undertaken in 1990 by the Geelong Regional Commission.

This new plan will be developed from an in-depth review of the current environmental nature and character of our district, what sort of community we are and want to be, what our planning goals and objectives are and how our population and the services and infrastructure we need are changing. The whole community will be invited to be involved in the plan's development and AIDA will keep members informed.



Mobile coverage program

Have you noticed that during the summer period, when demand for mobile phone services is at its highest, reception is often intermittent? And that when you travel half way to Anglesea the phone drops out? Summer is the time when residents need good mobile phone contact, critical for bushfire safety and the proper functioning of the FireReady app.

In February the federal government advertised two projects to improve coverage in regional areas of Australia. The \$80 million Mobile Network Expansion Project is designed to improve mobile coverage along major transport routes, in small communities and in communities that are prone to natural disasters. The \$20 million Mobile Black Spot Project is intended to improve mobile coverage in locations with unique coverage problems such as areas with high demand for services, for example in summer.

AIDA submitted a case for Aireys Inlet and district to be considered for improvement to existing mobile phone coverage under these projects. We also encouraged the shire to submit a proposal. Our community fits the criteria for consideration under each project. If we achieve an upgrade, we can expect widespread media coverage.

Gary Johnson

Planning zone changes in the Aireys Inlet district

A rethink on residential zones

As reported in our last newsletter, the government's revised planning controls for the state's residential zones were legally established in July last year as the first part of the Reformed Zones for Victoria program, although their inclusion in each planning scheme won't be implemented until July this year. Before then it will be up to the shire council to recommend to the minister which new residential zone it believes should replace the Aireys Inlet district's existing Residential Zone 1.

AIDA along with residents' groups throughout Victoria believed there was a very strong case to choose the new Neighbourhood Residential Zone for our area so that our existing neighbourhood character provisions will continue to apply and can be strengthened – and this approach was endorsed by the shire's manager of planning last year. However, in yet another case of needing to read the fine print, the planners now believe that, despite all initial appearances and the government's claim that it would best protect local character, the Neighbourhood Residential Zone cannot in fact include the existing hard-won neighbourhood character and environmental protection controls of the planning scheme.

For this reason the shire now proposes to recommend adopting the new General Residential Zone throughout all areas so as to ensure the continuing inclusion of the distinct neighbourhood character and environmental protection controls which currently apply in each area.

Rural zones

The third part of the government's Reformed Zones initiative, changes to rural zones, was implemented by a state-wide amendment to all planning schemes on 5 September last year. As with the residential zone changes we detailed in our April 2013 newsletter and the new commercial provisions described in our last newsletter, these changes follow the recommendations of a ministerial working party, which considered all public submissions made by the community.

The area affected in our district is the Rural Conservation Zone, which covers most private land around our townships but excludes public reserves and the national park. It incorporates all of Aireys Inlet north of Aireys Street and the Great Ocean Road and also Eastern View. In addition it covers the large allotments north of Boundary Road, those in the Painkalac Valley and along Bimbadeen Drive, and also

our farming hinterland. Unlike the new residential and commercial zones, there are no new rural zones proposed, however many of the restrictions over the types of development permitted within rural zones have been relaxed or removed altogether.

The changes that the government has now put in place are:

- reduction of restrictions on alterations and extensions to dwellings and farm buildings
- removal of the requirement for a mandatory section 173 agreement which restricts future subdivision after an initial subdivision is approved (AIDA is particularly concerned that this may relax the restrictions on the further sub-division of the Painkalac Valley)
- making fewer uses prohibited and more uses discretionary – including some accommodation, retail and commercial uses
- removal of the prohibition on primary and secondary schools
- increase in the threshold for persons that can be accommodated in a bed and breakfast without a permit, from six to ten
- removal of the ‘in conjunction’ requirement and other conditions for uses such as group accommodation, residential hotels and restaurants
- removal of other conditions which restrict uses such as freezing and cool storage, group accommodation, residential hotels and restaurants, and
- removal of the ability for councils to limit the number of bedrooms in a residential hotel and the number of patrons in a restaurant.

We and others like us across Victoria had one victory arising from the submission process in the abandonment of the proposal to allow camping and caravan parks, and to remove any conditions for them, in the Rural Conservation Zone, but as AIDA feared, the other changes now made have removed many

of the controls designed to restrict inappropriate developments in our lower density residential areas and in the green areas around our townships. We remain concerned, as we made clear in our submission, that the increased rural development now permitted:

- will remove indigenous vegetation, endanger threatened fauna, destroy iconic views now largely empty of visible development, and end the current strategic separation of our existing townships by allowing continuous coastal development
- will add substantially to traffic, all of which must be funnelled along the Great Ocean Road, with no alternative routes being available and no prospects for increasing road capacity; more development will reduce local accessibility, create serious delays for tourist traffic and impair public transport, health, police and fire safety services
- will further increase fire risk, even with the considerable protections of the newly revised bushfire planning overlay, put additional strain on existing roads in the bushfire season and place both the existing and the additional permitted residents’ and business people’s lives in jeopardy
- will lead to new demand for water supply and sewerage service that the existing infrastructure cannot provide, requiring integration with the broader Barwon Water network and removing the major restriction to unlimited urban growth along our coast.

In short, the new relaxed Rural Conservation Zone is likely to increase local population and the mix of activities in our settlements and along the coast, placing strains on the capacity of our infrastructure, including water, sewerage, roads and drainage – not to mention our pristine beaches and environment – and also possibly adding to existing fire risks. Increased traffic volumes will lead to congestion and reduced pedestrian safety, with the need for yet more signage, road sealing, formal streets and footpaths – the suburbanisation of Aireys Inlet and district.

Ian Godfrey





AIDA committee 2014

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AIDA archives

10 and 20 years ago

As readers of this column will know, AIDA has been around for quite some years, and our past newsletters date back to 1989. This selection includes two items showing that some things never change ...

Neighbourhood character

Dr Ray Green explained that small coastal towns in general are under pressure from development and residents commonly complain about the loss of the character of their town. Outside studies of the assessment of the character of an area are notoriously at odds with what the local residents think. The basic assumption should be that the locals are the experts in assessing neighbourhood character.

The method employed to complete our neighbourhood character study was a data collection survey of all ratepayers, a photo inventory based on the survey, community sessions where participants were asked to rate the photos, followed by Community Reference Group discussions. The lowest scores from this were for large, boxy houses unscreened by vegetation. Vegetation rated high usually, but exotic plant species rated low. The top rating for neighbourhood character was for views and natural features, and of high value were wildlife habitats, historical structures, and commercial developments with a social or community feeling, e.g. The General Store.

AIDA newsletter, Easter 2004

Friends of the Painkalac Creek valley

When we look back through AIDA minutes and other papers, for many years past, it is clear that the Painkalac Valley has been one of our main preoccupations. This is not surprising, given the major part it plays in establishing the character of the whole area. If you start at the Painkalac Creek Bridge, near the inlet, and take your way past the wetlands, flood plains, and river flats along Bamba Road up towards Boundary Road, it is obvious that this rural corridor, between the residential zones of Aireys Inlet and Fairhaven, provides an essential un-spoilt component in the composite picture of our area. A new group has been formed, Friends of Painkalac Creek Valley, to watch over what is happening in the valley, and what needs to be done to keep it in good shape. Most of our readers will know that a good stretch at the southern end is publicly-owned land, while the northern section is freehold land, subject to certain zoning restrictions.

Already the new group is seeking clarification of the Shire's plans for the valley, in the light of the policy recommendations set out in the Aireys Inlet to Eastern View Structure Plan.

AIDA newsletter, April 1994