



# AIDA

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



## AIDA's AGM – Saturday 23 April

AIDA's AGM will be held at 3pm on Saturday 23 April in the Aireys Inlet Community Centre. We have asked the Hall committee to assess the options for getting an effective wi-fi service into the Centre. If this can be installed in time, we will try to offer a hybrid AGM so members can attend in person or on-line. We will let you know if this is going to be an option.

The committee hopes to see many of you at the meeting and encourages you to attend. If you have not already done so you will be able to pay your subscription at the meeting and prospective members will be able to join on the day.

We have invited our ward councillors and the shire's CEO to provide the meeting with an update on council's plans relevant to our area. After the update there will be opportunities for questions from the floor.

The establishment of the Great Ocean Road Coast and Parks Authority has the capacity to make significant changes to the environment and tourist numbers and their management along the Road and the AIDA committee is closely following its activities as it meets the challenges before it.

To provide some up-to-date information about the Authority's progress, Operations Manager Danny Aitken

will discuss its plans and strategies to protect the Great Ocean Road's environment, local communities, and tourism. Danny was Acting CEO of the Authority until the CEO, Jodie Sizer, was able to take up the role. Danny will be able to answer any questions you may have about the Authority's activities.

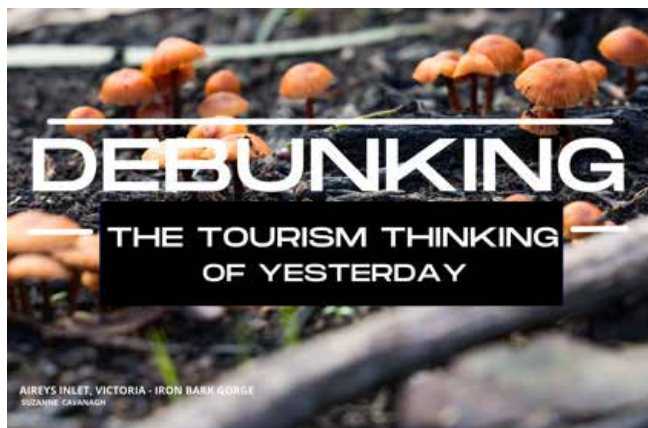
*Charlotte Allen*

## AIDA Committee membership

There are vacancies on the AIDA committee and we would welcome some new faces and thinking. Please consider nominating to join the committee, particularly if you have IT, communications, legal, planning or an environmental background and skills. But nominations from all members would be welcome.

The committee meets on the first Friday of the month at 7.30 – on Zoom or in the Community Centre – and from time to time there are other meetings or events where committee members are called on to contribute their time if they are available. The committee's work is fun as well as important. Please call me on 0418 567 977 if you would like more information about the committee's activities. See p. 8 for the committee nomination form.

*Charlotte Allen*



Well before Mother Nature showed who really was in charge during the pandemic, she sent many a message to the tourism sector ranging from hints for a behaviour reset, to unbridled scorn at our inaction and our delusions of being in control. Alas, her efforts fell on deaf ears. Clearly, she has been ticked off and quite frankly it would be churlish to blame her.

Tourism has for many years been seen as a stellar industry both in Australia and globally. Oft quoted figures are its 10% contribution to global GDP and nearly one in ten jobs. Over the years, as tourism became increasingly commodified, it pursued an industrial model of operation, pushing unbridled growth in visitor volume and business efficiency. The addiction of governments and corporations to the resulting rapid growth in revenue was clearly in evidence and in the process, the visitor experience of tourists became increasingly homogenised. Well before the pandemic, tourism was showing signs of meltdown. It became apparent even to those 'who-will-not-see' (having a vested interest in resisting change), that the industry had grave structural problems.

## One-sided balance sheet

In the last few decades, a changed language entered tourism. Where once the industry spoke in terms of guests, host communities and experiences, industrial-speak moved in and the language changed to products, volume, growth targets, promotion, and margins. The industrial model had found a new home. Tourism became something that was *done* to a community (think overseas-owned coach companies hurtling through environmentally sensitive hamlets adding to environmental degradation and annoying residents) not *with* a community. Infrastructure stress, traffic and visitor management, economic leakage and negative community sentiment paled in comparison to the (lucrative) destination promise. Inadequate acknowledgement of the cost burden became tantamount to running a business by only focusing on the revenue side of the balance sheet, never on costs.

## Mother nature steps in

Mother Nature didn't completely give up on us, her recalcitrant children, but some of her messages have become more strident during the pandemic:

- exponential growth simply does not work on a finite planet
- we are all part of the web of life, everything and everyone is interconnected and interdependent, our destinies are often intertwined
- healthy natural systems are fundamental to planetary health, to strong biodiversity, to a balanced and resilient economy and to the social wellbeing of our communities – both local and global.

## The other side of the balance sheet

*'With great irony, tourism, which often depends upon the Earth's natural beauty, is making enormous contributions to its decay in a very visible way.'*

UN Environment Programme

The 'Pandemic Pause' made transparent our under-preparedness to handle the world in which we were finding ourselves, not least because of our disconnection from nature. A critical review of tourism quickly unmasked its real vulnerabilities with its industrial-styled operating system and a system *'often reporting only half of the balance sheet'*. The 'Pause' provided a moment in time for us to rethink, to reassess what we really value. The pandemic may yet prove to be the impetus needed (where previous efforts have failed) to make the systemic changes necessary for a tourism future that is more accountable for its impacts and also more strategic in its thinking, overtly recognising the increasingly volatile and high-risk environment that community, government agencies and local businesses are facing, and which will need to be skilfully navigated in the future.

## Some of the fallout

For the first time in the fifteen-year history of the World Economic Forum's annual Risks Report (<https://tinyurl.com/54ac5x87>), environmental issues (climate action failure, extreme weather, biodiversity loss, natural disasters, human-made environmental disasters) account for the top five global risks.

Worldwide tourism is a major global greenhouse gas emitter. It accounts for 8% of GHG emissions (<https://e360.yale.edu/digest/tourism-accounts-for-8-percent-of-global-co2-emissions>) – a bigger polluter than the construction industry. Tourism has only recently started to respond. The impacts, however, are being felt not just environmentally but socially, culturally, and economically.

## Tourism's negative impacts

Action	Impact
Excessive tourism development	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Overcrowding, congestion</li> <li>• Disturbance of wildlife</li> <li>• Loss of environmental quality</li> <li>• Loss of aesthetic landscape</li> </ul>
Traffic and vehicles	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Soil and vegetation degradation</li> <li>• Traffic management problems</li> <li>• Overcrowded trails</li> </ul>
Greenhouse gasses	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Tourism – a major emitter</li> </ul>
Over-tourism	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Behavioural problems – damage to sites, disrespect</li> <li>• Loss of local culture and heritage</li> <li>• Pricing out locals</li> <li>• Stress on amenities – residents pay through taxes</li> <li>• Drop in residents' living standards</li> <li>• Fragmentation of community, resident dissatisfaction</li> <li>• Devaluation of tourism destination – economic loss</li> </ul>
Biodiversity loss Reduction of animal habitat	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Loss of species</li> <li>• Disruption of habitat</li> <li>• Changes in animal behaviour</li> <li>• Reduced plant regeneration</li> </ul>
Land degradation – damage to soil, coastline, dredging	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Erosion</li> <li>• Reduction of fertility</li> <li>• Salinisation</li> <li>• Soil acidification</li> </ul>
Socio-cultural	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Seasonal unemployment</li> <li>• Commodification of local culture</li> </ul>
Pollution	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Littering, plastics</li> <li>• Damage to waterways, discharge of sewage</li> <li>• Noise impacts for residents</li> <li>• Air pollution</li> </ul>

Most tourism policies have so far made insufficient *effective* commitment to sustainability: (IPBES: via *Huntington Post*. 'The rapid decline in the natural world is a crisis even bigger than climate change.' <https://tinyurl.com/sxw3vx7z>). They are invariably weak in the measurement and communication of non-economic measures around environmental and social impacts. There is still a limited perception of what tourism success really is.

Destinations around the globe (Venice, Thailand, Amsterdam, Barcelona, Hawaii, Dubrovnik to name a few), were inadvertently carving out a high-risk (and in some cases near dystopian) tourism future for themselves prior to the pandemic. They are now using this moment in time to transition to a sustainable tourism model. Some enlightened destinations, operators, place managers and government bodies are pushing further for a regenerative approach and driving regenerative practice within their communities. They are on a path to repair some of the harm done to the natural world, giving greater focus to indigenous learnings and recalibrating the way their communities work and participate. Many inspirational stories abound.

Biodiversity, coasts, mountains, rivers and estuaries are a vital part of the Aireys Inlet and Anglesea DNA. Our landscapes are important attractions. Our birdlife is phenomenal. Anglesea heath and the Aireys coast,

fringed by its rich heathland, have a quarter of Victoria's plant species and the heath is one of the most orchid-rich sites in Australia. The biodiversity of the region contributes significantly to the attractiveness and quality of our place for our visitors. Our natural attractions are what draw walkers and hikers and marine sanctuary lovers. Our magnificent starry sky opens up possibilities for us as a future Dark Sky destination and our history includes our Indigenous story and our rich maritime and recent history. Pockets of Aireys Inlet are starting to be rewilded by highly skilled, committed locals. Our Community Garden 3231 and Grow-Free 3231 are not just vibrant social hubs but encourage learning and produce-sharing.

A transformative approach to tourism can debunk the dogma of the 'industrial extractive approach' and allow tourism to play a powerful community role as a force for good. As shown in many overseas and domestic locations, it can help support a resilient local economy, improve local environmental stewardship and leadership and help enhance valuable connections between host communities, visitors and place. Today's visitors are looking for enriching experiences, for a reconnection with nature, for health and safety, for ethical and sustainable travel options, engagement opportunities with host communities and local culture, personalisation, and the benefits of smart technology, correctly used, to reduce travel friction.

As the doors to tourism visitation are cautiously opened this year, will we say that this is *our* moment in time for a mind-shift? Will our actions invest in our community's sustainable tourism future? As a host community will we think seriously about the social licence local and state agencies give to tourism operators privileged to participate in tourism along the Great Ocean Road? Will we require them to respect what we hold dear? Will we prioritise those who are willing to co-design with us a resilient future embedded in our respect for Aireys' unique natural system, vibrant community, and value-based local economy?

*Suzanne Cavanagh*

## How clean is our estuary?

The answer is we don't know! But there is a move on to find out. Many of you may be aware of the sewage spill into the Painkalac Estuary at the end of January.

Barwon Water explained that this was from a broken pipe at the pumping station and they advised that they cleaned up the river soon after. The signs warning against using the Estuary are now down.

But the fact is that regardless of such one-off incidents we don't actually know if the river is clean enough for recreational use. This year has seen a huge



increase in use of the Estuary, especially at the Inlet mouth, with lots of families with young children playing and swimming in the calm water. There was also swimming and fishing off the River Road jetties and plenty of kayakers and paddle-boarders using the river.

For more than thirty years groups of Estuary Watch volunteers have been monitoring the environmental health of the river but this testing does not include tests for *E. coli* or Enterococci, which could provide key information for public health.

In the last two weeks of January, when usage was at its highest and before the big rains and the sewage spill, some of the local volunteers from the Estuary Watch group started testing the river for *E. coli*. Both the Inlet mouth and the river at the corner of Coastal Court and River Road were tested twice over a two-week period. The volunteers paid for the results to be analysed in Geelong. Based on these results, the ALS lab in Geelong strongly recommended recreational use of the river (boating, swimming) should immediately stop.

Whilst the group understood that such a short testing regime was definitely not sufficient to provide ongoing advice to the community about river health, it was concerning enough for them to write to the mayor of Surf Coast Shire and ask for the shire to take the lead in addressing this matter urgently.

The shire immediately contacted the relevant stakeholders, Barwon Water, the EPA, and the Corangamite Catchment Management Authority. All are keen to co-operate on the matter. As a starting point, the EPA is sampling the river more comprehensively to get some baseline data that can be presented to the group so that a short- and long-term action plan can be designed and implemented.

The Painkalac Estuary is a unique community asset and is listed as protected under Commonwealth Salt Wedge Estuary national environmental law. We look forward to the day when we can say with confidence we have a clean river, safe for all to enjoy, and that we are able to communicate to the public with confidence the status of the health of the river at any time.

*Barbara Hammond and Kim Neubecker*

## Electric vehicle charging stations

The Surf Coast Council has secured funding under the State Government's [Destination Charging Across Victoria Program](#) to install four electric vehicle charging stations in the shire.

These will be in Aireys Inlet, Anglesea, Winchelsea as well as an upgrade to the current charger in Lorne. This will help our community and region reduce transport-related greenhouse gas emissions and

support the transition to electric vehicles, powered by 100% renewable electricity.

It will also build on recent works at the Aireys Inlet Community Centre to install a solar system with battery storage, switching the electricity supply to 100% renewable power.

The Aireys Inlet Community Centre is the primary location being considered for one 22kW charging station, which would be placed in the existing carpark.

The funding agreement was finalised in mid-February and council officers are in discussions with the Aireys Inlet Hall committee and user groups to determine the exact design and location of the station. The timing for installing the new EV charging stations has not been determined.

Other near-by locations to receive funding for stations are Queenscliff, Bellbrae, Apollo Bay, Colac and Warrnambool.

[PlugShare](#) is a platform that shows the locations and details of EV chargers across the world.

*Charlotte Allen*



## AIDA 1965 photo donated

For many years AIDA has owned a large aerial photo of Aireys Inlet that was taken in 1965. It is a remarkable photo as it clearly shows that Aireys was sparsely settled and an almost treeless area then.

Over the years the photo has been cared for by committee members and late last year a decision was taken that it should be shared with the community.

The photo was offered to the Surf Coast Shire to hang in the Aireys Inlet meeting room at the shire offices, but this was not practical as the room's walls are moveable and not suitable for hanging pictures.

AIDA then approached the Aireys Inlet Community Centre committee and offered them the photo to hang in the centre. They were delighted to accept the photo and, after being reframed, it will be hung in the hall for all to see and enjoy.

*Charlotte Allen*

## Road sharing

AIDA community surveys over decades show strong support for the 'rural' nature of our roads. The quiet, serene, village character of the Aireys district is partly reinforced by the way we balance what could be competing uses of roadsides and the roads themselves.

On our residential streets, whether paved or unpaved, the life (and movement) of townsfolk happens at a leisurely pace, prioritising social connection and the experience of being out in nature.

Of course, streets are used by cars, but in 'our place' vehicles share their movement with walkers and joggers and bicycle riders, with people pushing prams and leading dogs, with ducklings and kangaroos crossing. Cars are expected to allow time and space for people to engage in conversation as they move about, or to greet others over fences; that time and space even allows for people in cars to pull over and engage with pedestrians through lowered windows; other vehicles are expected to politely and slowly pass by.

This pattern of life on our 'non-urban' residential streets is, for many residents, part of the visual image they have of home. If that were true BC (before Covid) then it is likely to be even more so now.

But life on our streets is not all rosy. Traffic on the Great Ocean Road through Aireys has always been at odds with 'sharing roads'. Only a speed reduction from 80 to 60 suggests this is a residential area. Problems with the thoroughfare that divides the town (particularly in peak season) have been of recurring concern. Other 'entries' to the town – Distillery Creek and Bambra roads for example – are also (at times) 'pinch points' for our community street character.

Traffic management in the Surf Coast, visitation of the Great Ocean Road tourist precinct, planning and investment in walking and bicycle tracks, are being considered in government programs at the moment. In its role as an advocate for the Aireys district, AIDA needs to hear from its members, and as widely as possible from residents and visitors, about their views and experiences on all the dimensions of 'safer sharing of roads'. A survey on this is live and we need as many voices as possible. Please complete and circulate to friends in and around town.

Go to: <https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/7YCOL5P>. Or follow the link on the AIDA web site.

*Chris Ryan*

## Repair Café Surf Coast

Aireys Inlet locals Jo Murray and Sue Guinness are the co-founders and organisers of a wonderful initiative, the Repair Café Surf Coast. This is a monthly pop-up event where volunteers help visitors and locals by repairing broken and worn-out things and saving those things from going to landfill.



Repair Cafe Surf Coast occurs the first Sunday of every month (except for January and June), and is held in the Anglesea Memorial Hall in McMillan St. The next cafés are 6 March and 3 April.

Volunteers have the skills, knowledge and experience to repair a variety of items: clothing and textiles, toys, jewellery, bikes, small electrical and mechanical items, garden tools, clocks and more. It's a great place for children too. The Kids'Tinkering Zone' allows kids (3–15 years) to use tools to take apart and reassemble a range of broken items to see and learn how they work.

There is no charge for repairs effected by many skilled volunteers. Donations are appreciated to cover the costs of running the events.

The organisers estimate that since 2017 they have helped more than 350 visitors with repairs to more than 500 objects, saving them a lot of money on replacement items and keeping over 1400 kg from landfill, much of it plastic.

The Repair Café Surf Coast is a happy, bustling place. Try it! It has a Facebook page for more information: <https://www.facebook.com/RepairCafeSurfCoast/>

*Peter McPhee*



Our Pt Roadknight chick with parents\*

## Endangered hooded plovers

The volunteer group, Friends of the Hooded Plover – Surf Coast (FOHP), assists the birdlife project 'Beach-nesting Birds' along the coastline from Torquay to Moggs Creek. The breeding season for Hooded Plovers starts in August and continues until April. So far this season we have had about 20 nests but only one fledged chick. Two more chicks are currently enjoying the beach at Red Rocks, Point Addis. They have another two weeks before they will be able to fly well enough to remove themselves from danger. Our chick at Pt Roadknight fledged on Sunday 30 January after the FOHP wardens had spent more than 420 hours on the beach reminding dog owners to take their dogs elsewhere and educating the public about the lifestyle of our resident hoodies and the need to protect them.

The story closer to home has not been a success this season. The breeding pair, HP & SH, which usually nest between the Inlet at Aireys and the Fairhaven Surf Club, have had numerous nests but each nest has failed due to high tides and other natural causes. RA and his un-banded partner incubated eggs at Moggs Creek for 27 days. Unfortunately when Margaret McDonald went to check on whether the chicks had hatched on day 28 she was confronted with a destroyed nest and lots of dog prints. It is unlikely this pair will try again this season. EV has waited patiently on the beach opposite the pole house for a female Hooded Plover to fly past and notice him. We hope he ventures to other beaches to find a partner during the non-breeding season.

We have been pleasantly surprised this season by the interest that beach walkers have shown about the plight of hoodies and the chick's progress. It seems the more people know about the hoodies the better they understand how they can assist in bringing this endangered species back from the brink of extinction.

AIDA has contributed to the improved attitude of the public to the hooded plovers by paying for some new A-frame boards that have been placed at entrances to the beaches. The boards provide up-to-date information of the hoodie action on each beach, be it the birds trying to find a suitable place to lay eggs or looking after a day-old chick. Bron Ives has been continually updating these boards with relevant information. Some of you might have seen the board near the Mad Max steps – 'What worries hoodies ...'



A dog reading the warning board at Mad Max Steps

These boards have a much greater impact than the rather sterile notices that the Land Managers have to erect to indicate the current rules. Because the Dog Exclusion Zones are temporary and only invoked while there are chicks on the beach, it can come as a surprise to dog owners when they are suddenly excluded from their favourite beach. The A-frame boards provide a friendly warning before the dogs actually get to the





beach. Having a warden on the beach adds another level of protection for the hoodies.

FOHP – Surf Coast thanks AIDA for your contribution, which was quickly provided when we had more nests than boards. We would also like to thank GORA and Parks Vic for the very efficient way they have provided fencing around the nests and the establishment of Dog Exclusion Zones when chicks have hatched.

Surf Coast Shire local laws officers have patrolled the beaches with GORA reminding people that we share the beaches with wildlife. DELWP and the local police have also attended. The presence of these officials has made the work of the wardens much easier.

It has also been a season when 'hoodie success' stories have been a pleasant relief from the constant depressing COVID news. We have been filmed by the ABC and Channel Nine. We have had positive press in the *Surf Coast Times*, the Angair newsletter, *Newsangle*, the AIDA newsletter, the Community Garden 3231 newsletter and a wonderful mural of a Hooded Plover and chick on the front of the Community Hall. Our thanks to AIDA for your support.

*Janice Carpenter, Regional Coordinator,  
Friends of the Hooded Plover, Surf Coast*



Our Pt Roadknight chick with parents



A-frame boards at Moggs Creek provided by AIDA

*\*Bron Ives' photos taken in line with BirdLife Australia's 'Guidelines for Photographing Beach-nesting Birds.'*

## Nomination form for AIDA committee 2022

PERSON NOMINATED: (BLOCK LETTERS PLEASE) \_\_\_\_\_

PROPOSED BY: \_\_\_\_\_

NOMINATED FOR: (PLEASE TICK APPROPRIATE BOX)

PRESIDENT

☐

VICE PRESIDENT

☐

SECRETARY

☐

TREASURER

☐

COMMITTEE MEMBER

☐

ACCEPTANCE OF NOMINATION: \_\_\_\_\_

DATE: \_\_\_\_\_

## AIDA code of ethics for committee members

- (1) To support the Aims and Policies of AIDA
- (2) To be an active and committed member in the best interests of AIDA, free of motives of personal advantage and/or information gathering for personal advantage or gain.
- (3) To accept all decisions of AIDA made by constitutional means, and to refrain from public adverse comment about those decisions in any form which claims or implies representation of AIDA.
- (4) To declare any actual or perceived vested or pecuniary interest, and to abstain from voting in cases where such an interest exists. This interest must be declared before any relevant agenda item is dealt with, or when such conflict of interest becomes clear.

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_