



AIDA

November 2019 • www.aireys-inlet.org

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



AIDA is now on Facebook!

Community and member engagement is important to us

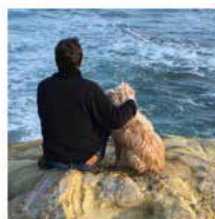
We are now on Facebook so we can connect with you. Join us as we share information and talk about the local environment, our actions in helping preserve it and the actions we are taking to help protect its unique character, which is increasingly under threat.

Our area has a breathtaking coastline, secluded beaches, rich bio-diversity, a marine sanctuary, native wetlands and coastal forests. AIDA is committed to protecting the natural environment, landscapes, our community and the local character.

Join us on Facebook at:

AIDA - Aireys Inlet District Association [[@AIDAaireysinlet](https://www.facebook.com/AIDAaireysinlet)] or simply click this link: <https://www.facebook.com/AIDAaireysinlet>

Suzanne Cavanagh



WE'RE ON FACEBOOK!
AIDA
 preserving. conserving. protecting
 From Eastern View to Urquhart Bluff
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Volunteers planted around 1500 indigenous plants on Lot 2 Bambra Road, including those around the newly filled billabong

Painkalac Valley update

Updates on the Painkalac Valley about the various concerns we have over compliance with the Conservation Management Plan (CMP) have been included in many recent newsletters.

We understand that individual Action Plans have been negotiated with the landowners and lessee of Lot 3, but unfortunately the shire initially declined to provide an update in time for the newsletter deadline, then later agreed to do so. We will email this to you with any important new information. The issues we are particularly interested in are the continued grazing in the now fenced ephemeral wetlands, lack of protection of remnant vegetation, the horse boxes and low bridges in the paddocks on Lot 3, drainage works in the valley affecting health of wetlands, creek and biodiversity and the use of barbed wire and white droppers.

We have continued discussing our concerns about compliance with the CMP with our lawyers. They are in the process of preparing a letter to the shire for AIDA.

Application for a bridge over the Painkalac Creek

The application from Blazing Saddles for a bridge over the Painkalac Creek to link its property on the western side of the creek to the land it leases on the eastern side has been lodged with council. The application

is not being advertised yet so we have not seen any documentation about the plans. (We have been assured by council that the plans will be advertised.)

The AIDA committee has significant concerns about the alienation of public land for a private business as well as other potential issues such as visual and environmental impacts. The creek-side land is protected under a Public Conservation and Resource Zone and other special planning zones. We will email you to let you know when the documents are available for viewing and what action we will be taking.

The application number for the bridge is 19/0409.

Charlotte Allen

Painkalac Valley Landcare Grant

The Painkalac Valley Rehabilitation Project has recently received a Landcare grant to support their ongoing work on an 11 acre section of the upper part of the Painkalac Valley. ANGAIR had applied for the \$18,600 grant through the Corangamite Catchment Management Authority for work on Lot 2 Bambra Road.

The grant will be used to assist with continued revegetation of both the drier, elevated part of the block near Bambra Rd and the more extensive flood plain extending approximately 300 metres along the Painkalac Creek. This area includes a natural billabong, shown in the photo during August, which forms during the wetter winter months. The grant recognises the

benefit to the environment both through the creation of wetland habitat and to water quality in the upper part of the Painkalac Creek from removing stock and establishing more normal, naturally-filtered water flows through revegetated areas.

The owners, ANGAIR and AIDA members have worked throughout the year with weeding, fence removal and the planting of around 1500 seedlings, all propagated from local seed. One of the most satisfying aspects of this has been the creation of habitat for local birds and animals. The billabong has been brought back to life with the blocking of a pipe, previously used to drain the area. By September the billabong was home to several species of waterbird and was full of tadpoles, water plants and insects. It was also somewhat fouled by rotting weeds. One of the challenges for next year will be to clear the whole area of weeds prior to autumn rains.

The grant will be used in 2020 to support the planting of a further 4000–5000 seedlings adjacent to the Painkalac Creek, providing more habitat for local animals and further enhancing water quality in the creek. We also plan to sow an area of native grasses next to the billabong for the kangaroos to feed on.

Michael Loughnan

The Landcare Grant is supported by the volunteer labour provided by ANGAIR and AIDA members, which is counted as a contribution.

Working bees are held at regular intervals during the year. If any AIDA members would like to join the working bees they would be very welcome but would need to join ANGAIR as AIDA does not have any insurance to cover volunteers. For more information please contact Roger Ganly: rganly8@bigpond.com or 0409 502 480.

Charlotte Allen

Summer forum

This year AIDA is once again organising a summer forum scheduled for early to mid-January. Last year, Libby Sampson – Senior Project Manager, Great Ocean Road Management Reform – and Jamie Rowe, Eastern Maar Aboriginal Corporation – spoke about plans for reform of the management of the Great Ocean Road and its environs as recommended by the Great Ocean Road Action Plan.

The Great Ocean Road Action Plan contains the government's response to a task force set up to consider the protection of the local environment along the Great Ocean Road. This plan recommends that, instead of many small authorities, there should

be one overarching authority under the auspices of Department of Environment, Land and Planning.

One of the major tasks of this new authority is the management of tourism numbers in such a way that the area reaps the benefits of tourism, while at the same time not becoming a victim of its own success. How we as a community handle the projected increase in tourist numbers is of major importance to AIDA.

This year it seems appropriate to continue the theme of the implementation of the action plan. The timeline for the implementation states that the long-term objectives will be established in the last quarter of this year, and in the first quarter of next year the authority will seek public consultation and community views. It seems appropriate that community members have the opportunity to find out more about the plan before the start of public consultation.

AIDA looks forward to welcoming members and non-members to what will be an interesting and topical session.

We will post the date and venue details on our new Facebook page – @AIDAaireysinlet – and also email members.

Frieda Wachsmann

Aireys Inlet Primary School Fair

AIDA Stall: Saturday 2 November 9–3pm

Drop in and say hi and have a chat with the committee and potential new members about Aireys Inlet planning and environment issues and Great Ocean Road Planning.

Congratulations

Libby Coker, Tony Revell

Congratulations to Libby Coker on her win in the recent federal election. With Libby elected as the new member for Corangamite a by-election for a new ward councillor was required by the Surf Coast Shire. The by-election was held in September.

After many years of there being a ward councillor from the Aireys Inlet/Fairhaven area it was disappointing that we had no 'local' candidate this election. Prior to the election the AIDA committee contacted all the candidates to inform them about AIDA and its aims.

The successful candidate, Anglesea resident Tony Revell, has been invited to meet with the AIDA committee prior to its next meeting so we can introduce ourselves and give him a thorough briefing about AIDA, its aims and work, and the importance of our constructive working relationship with the shire and our ward councillors.

Great Ocean Road open for summer



The Bailey bridge at Moggs Creek will become a pedestrian bridge for summer

Pedestrians will enjoy their own dedicated bridge access to the beach at Moggs Creek during this year's summer holiday break

Two lanes open

Both lanes of the Great Ocean Road at Moggs Creek will remain open to traffic for the peak summer holiday period.

The start date for work on building a stronger and wider bridge at Moggs Creek has been moved to early February 2020.

Holiday traffic

The works have been timed to avoid travel delays during the coastline's busiest holiday period - the summer school holidays, Christmas and New Year, the Australia Day long weekend and Chinese New Year.

Traffic management

While we still expect some impact to traffic as works get underway, our construction schedule will ensure these are minimised and that appropriate traffic management is in place.

The temporary Bailey bridge, which has been lifted into place to span the creek, will shortly be

opened for pedestrian use.

This will provide easy and spacious access to the boardwalk and beach from Old Coach Road.

The adjoining car park will also remain open to beachgoers during the holiday period.

Construction

Preliminary site works carried out this year will ensure an immediate start on construction in February.

Once work begins to demolish the old bridge, Great Ocean Road traffic will be diverted onto the Bailey bridge.

The new bridge, to be built in the same position as the old bridge, is expected to be completed before spring 2020.

Contact us

We value your feedback.

You can send comments to:

greatoceanroad@roads.vic.gov.au

Moggs Creek bridge replacement

A spokesperson for Regional Roads Victoria said that work on the new Moggs Creek bridge will begin after the peak summer period. The decision on the exact dates for construction will depend on consultation between VicRoads, Emergency Services and the CFA to put a fire plan, including optimum dates, in place to ensure the safety of the community. See further information from Regional Roads Victoria (above).

Planning challenges

One of AIDA's aims is to ensure that, as our area develops and changes, it retains its low-key coastal village character with houses nestled in the trees.

To help meet this aim one of the AIDA committee's regular tasks is to review all the planning applications submitted to council that are in the area from Urquhart Bluff to Eastern View. This is done to ensure new building works comply with all the shire's planning policies and regulations and meet our Neighbourhood Character Guidelines. In all instances where there are significant breaches of the various planning policies AIDA lodges an objection. At times this results in us appearing at VCAT.

It has been very disappointing recently that there have been four applications lodged for large blocky homes suited to an urban environment that fail to meet height requirements, view sharing and Neighbourhood Character Guidelines.

In addition there has been an application for a four-storey house that would have a significant visual impact on Fairhaven's woody hillside overlooking the Painkalac Valley and be highly visible from Aireys Inlet. The proposed tall turret style house would give the owners a panoramic view above the treeline from two floors with shiny glass balconies, steel walls and solar panels increasing its intrusion in the landscape. Planning controls provide for buildings nestled into the trees and limit height to 7.5m while this proposal is 13.2m high. The shire advertised the application to adjoining neighbours but not to residents in Aireys Inlet across the valley. The application, number 19/0122, is still open for objections.

Perhaps even more disturbing is the application for planning approval for some significant buildings works that were completed several years ago without permits. It is our view that everyone should respect the building policies that have been agreed between the shire and the community over many years when planning their build and that anyone building without a permit should face significant penalties.

We lodged objections to all the applications mentioned above.

Charlotte Allen

New Marine and Coastal Policy

A new Marine and Coastal Policy being developed under the *Marine and Coastal Act 2018* is due for release in December. The plan aims to better manage coastal eco-systems, including all public and private land and coastal waters in Victorian and 5.5 km inland of the high water mark (an extension inland on current policies). The draft policy aims to better integrate planning for marine and coastal areas, consider whole of eco-system impacts of new proposals and give greater roles to traditional owners. Priorities include managing risks such as climate change, defining coastal town boundaries, protecting non-urban breaks between settlements and improving the design and siting of buildings to better respect the coastal and marine landscape context and minimise impacts on the environment.

The draft policy supports buildings and structures that depend on being on the coast but seeks to recover crown land from those that are not dependent and limit development where there is a coastal hazard risk.

- *Usually located on coastal crown land because of direct support of coastal activities* – jetty, pier, marina, mooring, boat ramp, harbour, navigation aids, life-saving, observation tower
- *Not necessary to be on coastal crown land but provide some support to the functioning of coastal activities and therefore may be appropriate* – toilet facilities, shared trails, boardwalks and stairs, car-parking, equipment storage facilities, marine rescue facility, lifesaving clubrooms, multi-functional facilities, public lookouts, BBQs, picnic and play equipment, kiosk/café/restaurant (in an urban setting)
- *Coastal Crown Land location not necessary and no provisions of support to coastal activity, to be removed/relocated as the opportunity arises* – non-water-based sporting facilities, non-maritime industrial plant and storage, private infrastructure e.g. jetties, paths, bathing boxes, fishing huts, community hall, commercial function centre, memorial plaques.

The policy will be implemented through the development of new marine spatial plans (for individual marine sectors), potential changes to state and local planning provisions, councils and catchment management authorities required to consider marine and coastal policy and any marine plans in their planning and land and water management. More information at:

<https://engage.vic.gov.au/draft-marine-and-coastal-policy>

The Victorian National Parks Association has identified a number of weaknesses with the draft strategy – details at:

https://vnpa.org.au/wp-content/uploads/2019/09/VNPA-Submission_Marine-and-Coastal-Policy.pdf

Catherine McNaughton

New EPA regulations

The Victorian Government is introducing new EPA regulations with the new EPA Act in July 2020. Comments are invited till 31 October. The regulations and new Act are major reforms and updates for reducing pollution, and enforcement, following a critical review of the EPA.

The Act will introduce a new comprehensive framework for pollution control based on a 'general environmental duty' to care for the environment and not to pollute. It seeks to 'minimise risks of harm to human health from pollution or waste so far as reasonably practicable'. This is a much more proactive approach and includes important new rights for appeals by third parties, such as individuals and community groups, to enforce pollution controls. New regulations are proposed on waste, litter, septic tanks, air, vehicle emissions, noise, water, contaminated land, plastic bags and fees. The new Act and regulations will cover climate change under controls for pollution and waste. But it is unclear how this would work and how strongly it would apply to government decision-making. It is also unclear how the new Act and regulations would control disturbance of 'natural' pollutants such as saline or acid sulfate soils.

An EPA charter for consultation is also open for comment till 10 November – information on this and the EPA regulations is available at <https://engage.vic.gov.au/new-environmental-laws/subordinate-legislation>

Environment Justice Australia has reviewed the proposals, with more information at <https://www.envirojustice.org.au/projects/have-your-say-on-the-detail-of-victorias-pollution-control-laws/>

Catherine McNaughton

Mining the potential for a future Eden in Anglesea



Readers of this newsletter are likely to have seen some of the promotional media for the Anglesea Eden Project, a proposed \$150m 'experience centre' on the old Alcoa site, drawing on a UK development of the same name. Assessing the value and potential impacts

of this proposal has proven difficult for the Anglesea community. One thing is clear: the impact from such a project would reach way beyond the existing town.

There may soon come a time when communities along this section of the Great Ocean Road will need to be actively involved in shaping what develops beyond the current, rather sketchy, projection of an idea. When that time will come is unclear. In fact it is unclear just how serious a proposal this actually is. Which is not to say its 'development' should not be scrutinised carefully.

The Eden background in brief

The Eden Project <<http://www.edenproject.com>> in the UK dates back to the millennium year 2000. It transformed an old mine pit in Cornwall in the UK into a significant ecological education centre with multiple rainforest and Mediterranean greenhouse 'biodomes' and associated education facilities.

The UK Eden is one of a number of visionary millennium projects first funded from government investment and a government established lottery. It is an impressive and enduring success. From around £125 million capital investment, Eden employs some 400 people and has attracted more than 18 million visitors since 2001. It has contributed more than £1.7 billion to the local economy.

Eden's success has led to many proposals to develop similar projects in other parts of the world. It is argued that the project offers more than a 'template' for the successful operation of biodome ecosystems; they now have significant project management experience and scientific expertise in the development of 'transformational ecology, community and education projects'. The idea of spreading this form of experience and learning centres beyond the UK is seductive.

The vision for an Anglesea Eden



The origin of the Anglesea–Alcoa–Eden connection isn't clear; the idea of establishing this 'Eden' must surely have had a more substantive base than 'here is another mine site that could be rehabilitated from a dark fossil fuel past to a green future'?

What is proposed is not a reproduction of the Cornwall site (huge glasshouses are not easy to operate in the ever hotter Anglesea summers). What is envisaged is an education centre focused on the intricate complexities and history of the Great Ocean Road (GOR). The site would have various areas of education about the GOR with different immersive experiences suited to the exploration of, for example, its geology, ecosystems, Aboriginal history, and so on. Visual mock-ups of such potential experiences in the transformed mine site have been widely reproduced in local and national media. The project is described as becoming a world-class eco-tourism facility on the GOR.



At the centre of this envisaged eco-tourism attraction is a new water body – a huge lake created by filling the mine void (which is many tens of metres below sea level at its base).

A website for the project has been established at www.edenprojectanglesea.com.au

There is an inspiring YouTube concept video at: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=AYNr7CZOjzs&feature=youtu>

Consultations with ‘the community’

The idea is promoted as having very strong support from the local community, the shire and the state. The project team (Alcoa, Eden International and a PR consultancy) have conducted a range of consultations with citizens and affected parties.

A report on the ‘Community Engagement, Feedback and Response’ is publicly accessible on a dropbox < https://www.dropbox.com/s/pxveafyqeah5aht/eden%20project-anglesea%20concept_community%20response_july%202019_web_final.pdf >.

That report presents the results of community drop-in events, stakeholder meetings, feedback forms received, and so on, reaching ‘600+’ people. The Wadawurrung Aboriginal Corporation, Surf Coast Shire and the G21 Geelong Region Alliance have all been consulted.

Critical questions for alert scrutineers (all GOR residents)

OK, so now to the question of what is actually going on behind this very speculative proposal – what could it mean, for Anglesea, for Aireys, for Torquay...for tourism on the GOR?

The estimated cost for this proposed development is widely stated as \$150m; that has to be seen as little more than a guesstimate – perhaps more what the project team think can be raised from potential investors. There is no detail about the planning and design that would be necessary to do a real costing. Whatever basis there is for that estimate was presumably used for the projected visitor numbers of 750,000 a year (sometimes inflated to ‘around a million’). These figures have been extended to more detailed estimates of peak visitation per day: 3000–4000 people. As there is no idea of entry charges, etc., these are again very rubbery figures. Without knowing what rate of return their proposed ‘impact investors’ would expect, ticket prices, etc., can’t be estimated.

One way of understanding this project is to see it in the context of tourism along the GOR, which is already becoming a significant challenge. The pressure from the six million tourists per year travelling along the road has been receiving a lot of attention as the history of the GOR is celebrated. In particular there is growing concern over the increasing number of (mostly) foreign tourists bussing along the road. They spend very little along the way but rely on the provision of public facilities such as toilets. (This was much discussed at the AIDA forum on the GOR held early this year at the Fairhaven lifesaving club.)

One approach to tourism challenges such as these for the GOR is to create ‘attractors’ that seduce people to stop and contribute financially to local economies. However, that solution is not likely to have much impact on the behaviour of the bussed tourists, who are time constrained in travelling to their turn-around point at the Twelve(?) Apostles on low-cost totally pre-paid tours. When they stop at ‘attractors’ it is often just a toilet stop.

So, most of the estimated Eden visitors will presumably be day-trippers, school groups and a fraction of all those millions of other tourists who currently travel the road

It is not surprising that the main issue mentioned in the survey responses was ‘traffic, roads and access’. What is envisaged would represent a massive increase in local traffic around the Anglesea area. As with all tourism development scenarios, this local increase in visitor numbers is seen by some of the survey respondents as

a small cost when balanced against new local economic stimulus and on-going jobs. (That is the argument heavily promoted by Eden public relations.)

For a relatively small community there are important issues to weigh up; such a big tourist attraction would change the character of the town in complex ways.

Who should have a say in such a decision, based on what information? This is a critical question expressed repeatedly at community meetings with Alcoa and the shire. As the Anglesea-Eden 'plans' develop, this is a question that has to be asked by residents and ratepayers well beyond the boundaries of Anglesea.

One aspect of Eden not discussed

Increased traffic has implications that go beyond congestion and road maintenance. This proposed development has to be viewed against the multiple challenges arising from climate change.

Many GOR residents are already extremely concerned about the risk of fire and the apparent lack of serious planning for traffic on the GOR on days of extreme fire danger. Anglesea and Aireys have additional climate-related challenges from rising sea levels and increased storm events that could intersect with road congestion and fire events. (That is the kind of extreme event that keeps insurance actuaries awake at night, comparing probabilities to the likely scale of the damage.)

With speculative proposals for future developments, questions such as fire and traffic control are often relegated to the future, to the 'detailed design/planning' stage. However, many people who support the terminology of 'emergency' in discussing the implications of climate change do so because they see so much resistance to planning for a future that will deviate significantly from current conditions, for example in seasonal temperature and rainfall.

A development, such as Eden, will have an expected lifetime of fifty or more years.

Will there be an Eden on the coast?

According to the minutes of an Alcoa Community Consultative Meeting on 12 August this year: 'David Harland was asked how long the Eden Project would persist with Anglesea as their preferred location before lack of government decision forced them to look for an alternative site. David responded, About six months'.

Pressure indeed, but seemingly at odds with some other expressed project uncertainties. There is the critical question of finding and convincing investors. Another very large uncertainty is the filling of the lake. Research that we conducted at the University of Melbourne in 2014-15 (based on a prediction that

Alcoa would close the mine) suggested that it would take 30-50 years for the void to fill from surface water.

The economics of the Eden project apparently only stack up if the lake is full within 5-7 years - the expected construction time for the project. It is currently around 7 per cent full. A rapid-fill scenario depends on the diversion of a waterway - Salt Creek - into the mine and (depending on climate and rainfall) the purchase of recycled and aquifer water. Purchasing water would be a huge capital cost which may or may not have been factored into the \$150m. The Salt Creek option is 'currently being considered by DELWP to determine any potential downstream detrimental impacts that may result'; creating the lake is also a political problem, presumably one the government will have to tackle within six months.

In all of this planning and media spruiking, the underlying question that invites a sceptical attitude is the interests of Alcoa. It is certainly not clear whether they plan to contribute capital to the venture; they speak only of a 'desire to leave a positive legacy to the community'. They are one of the owners of land on the site. A \$150m investment on the old mine would certainly change the value of land on and around the area.



Should there be an Eden on the Coast?

This is a question to keep asking.

If Eden International are looking elsewhere and if the tourism/economic value of such a project is accepted, then another, different, question arises:

Wouldn't the Eden venture be a better proposition for somewhere on the 'inland' side of the GOR where the issues of congestion and economic returns - and job creation - may look quite different? A high proportion of GOR travellers already use the inland route for the return trip to Melbourne. There is good argument for diverting much of the growth in Apostles' tourism to that inland route to resolve the negative impacts of tourism along this nationally significant Australian visitor attraction.

Christopher Ryan