



AIDA

September 2017 • www.aireys-inlet.org

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



Proposed new Moggs Creek bridge

Members were emailed about VicRoads' plans for a new bridge at Moggs Creek and the information session on Saturday 16 September.

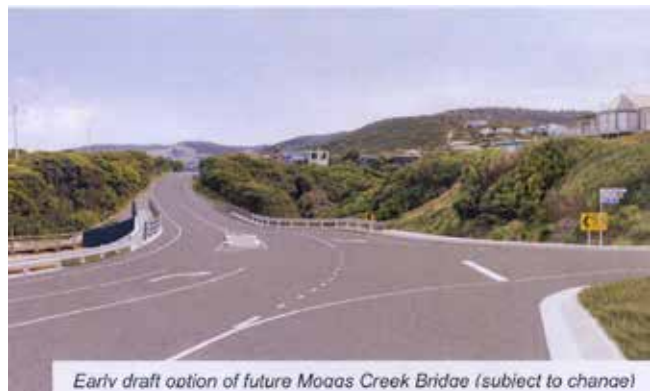
VicRoads sent letters to householders in Fairhaven, Moggs Creek and Eastern View, and notices were placed in local papers and in Aireys' businesses. AIDA also received a letter, as VicRoads recognised us as a key stakeholder.

The VicRoads' letter stated that the Moggs Creek bridge has deteriorated to the extent that VicRoads estimates only a two year life span. They propose a new bridge that will 'cater for increases in traffic volume, load-carrying capacity and safer access for pedestrians and cyclists'. They are also considering realigning the Great Ocean Road at Moggs Creek to improve safety at the intersection with Old Coach Road. Work is estimated to start in mid-2018.

VicRoads are aware of community backlash at the lack of consultation with their installation of the Fairhaven underpass. VicRoads has informed AIDA that it will be supplied with the concept plans so that we can share these with members. If you couldn't get to the information session, the VicRoads project team can

be contacted by phone on (03) 5225 2562 or by email at greatoceanroad@roads.vic.gov.au

We will be interested to see what VicRoads is planning and encourage members to express their views. As with all major works on the Great Ocean Road, the sensitive environmental and visual nature of the area is ours to protect.



Above: the new bridge with pedestrian path at left

Fairhaven underpass

We are frustrated that the various actions agreed to by VicRoads are taking so long to complete and that the timing keeps slipping. The latest information we have from VicRoads follows.

Landscape planting of 1.3 m high Prickly Tea-tree plants on the south side of the Great Ocean Road and of Seaberry Saltbush in a triangular bed on the north side of the Great Ocean Road has been completed.

The painting of the remainder of the underpass, ramp walls, barriers and fences will be carried out from this month (September) when the weather is warmer, for curing of the two coats of paint.

Lights on top of the poles near the stairs will be replaced with lights that are not as bright and have a narrower beam. This is also planned to happen in September.

Charlotte Allen

AIDA Facebook page

We now have an AIDA Facebook page. Check it out:

<https://www.facebook.com/AireysInletandDistrictAssociation/>

We encourage you to follow us and please tell your family and friends to do the same.

Let us know if there is anything you would like us to consider posting. We have decided to trial the Facebook page for six months to see if it is a worthwhile addition to AIDA's communication with members and others.

Friends of the Allen Noble Sanctuary

The Allen Noble Sanctuary is nestled between the Great Ocean Road, the Painkalac Creek Estuary and Split Point at Aireys Inlet. Early photographs show 'The Swamp' with banks grazed to the water's edge by cattle, before Allen Noble and his family took the lead in preserving the wildlife. The Noble family home, 'Angahook', was adjacent to the small wetland but was burnt down in the 1983 Ash Wednesday fire. The wetland was eventually named in memory of Allen George MacMullen Noble (1884–1964) who had encouraged birds and discouraged duck shooters. There was also a seat dedicated to his wife, Estelle Noble, née Maberly-Smith.



James Bell remembered Mr Noble fishing for the huge silver eels up river and hanging them from hooks in the backyard before he skinned them. In the swamp there were black eels as big as your arm. He also used to amuse guests by leaving a trail of raw eggs from the swamp onto dry land, and then in the evening watch eels wriggle up onto the grass and devour the eggs. Claire Roberts, Allen Noble's daughter, who lived in 'Anghook' till her death a few years ago, used to keep a detailed list of birds, and particularly the swans and their cygnets.



In the 1967 drought, the swamp dried up and it was possible to walk across its cracked, crusty surface.

During the 1970s, AIDA encouraged the planting of native species around the sanctuary, however many of these, although native plants, proved to be weeds. After the Ash Wednesday fire that devastated Aireys Inlet in 1983, the surrounding land became a tangle of scotch thistles.

In the 1990s, Claire Roberts, who was an enthusiastic supporter and early member of AIDA and ANGAIR (Anglesea, Aireys Inlet Society for the Protection of Flora and Fauna), approached AIDA with concerns about the degraded state of the sanctuary. Silting from the surrounding dirt roads and nutrient-rich groundwater from residents' septic tanks had turned the sanctuary into a shallow, weed-infested swamp. Kim Neubecker, in her capacity as AIDA president, initiated discussions with the Surf Coast Shire to develop a cohesive plan of action to fund extensive rehabilitation work. Working with Jeanette Spittle, Conservation Officer at the shire, she developed funding strategies, engaged a landscape architect to design a master plan and began to lobby local councillors to access capital works funding through the shire's infrastructure department.

In January 2000, Kim Neubecker, landscape architect Graeme Quinn, hydrologist Neil Craighie, and shire representative Pat Condina, met at the almost dried-up sanctuary to discuss the project to drain and reshape the sanctuary, construct the boardwalk and pathways, and plant indigenous species. In June of that year the landscape plan was displayed for public comment, and then adopted by the shire. In 2001 Geoff Clarke and Jeanette Spittle selected the plant species and planned the planting schedule. Later that year, heavy rain postponed the work. Then, in 2002, all the shire's capital works were postponed due to a funding deficit at the shire, which particularly affected maintenance and infrastructure projects.

In 2003 there were ongoing difficult negotiations between AIDA and the shire. Many problems arose, such as the possible need for dredging, which had always been part of the original plan. The concern was that the material to be dredged could be a biohazard or contain heavy metals, which would have to be removed before immediate replanting to prevent weed invasion and sustain marine life.

In 2004 the shire finally did all the complex drainage and construction work. This was followed by mass planting by the shire with the help of AIDA and ANGAIR volunteers, and the project was completed later that year. With regular inflows due to increased storm-water drainage, the wetland attracted birds and people alike, the former to enjoy the abundance of natural food and water, and the latter to enjoy the peace and natural beauty of the environment.



In 2008 Jeff Raglus and Alex Lorenzi carved Buckley's Bunyip beside the wetlands from the residual stump of an introduced cypress pine tree that had been cut down there during the works. It recognised the time escaped convict William Buckley spent living with the local Wathaurong people, and his claim to have seen a bunyip. It features birds, insects, weather, myths and the history of the wetlands. Geoff recently renovated and restored the work by painting and preserving the timber. In 2009 the cypress pine Powerful Owl that keeps watch over the sanctuary was also sculpted and is maintained by local artist Bill Jackman.

However, by 2010 the sanctuary was again looking tired and overgrown with weeds. So, after discussion with a number of residents, I decided to take action to help the shire care for this precious natural resource and approached ANGAIR to auspice the Friends of Allen Noble Sanctuary (FANS). With the agreement and support of the shire, regular working bees were organised to attack the weeds and replace them with new local plants. The first working bee was held in May 2010, and attended by twelve people. In August of that year Margaret MacDonald involved the students of Aireys Inlet Primary School in a big planting. A very enthusiastic former shire employee, Matt Hamilton, worked closely with the group in the early days of FANS and, at one memorable working bee, organised a mass

planting. Matt also removed over-vigorous local plants that were taking over some areas (an ongoing problem which needs addressing). He then organised working bees with schools and other volunteer groups to replant these areas with less vigorous local species. Ross Murray has done major planting and weeding in recent years, and has been the most regular working bee attendee, occasionally on his own. His pet project has been the area in front of the playground under the large Norfolk Island pine tree. He has worked hard to clear, replant, and maintain it in memory of Claire Roberts.

Last year a couple of enthusiastic groups of young people from the Green Army did some really useful weeding. We are sorry that this government-funded program has been discontinued. This year Kate Driscoll and Liz Wood took on the task of publicising the group, and also helping with the organisation of the working bees. This has led to a very encouraging increase in the number of volunteers attending working bees after several years of very low numbers. In total, FANS has contributed well over 400 hours of volunteer labour in the sanctuary.

Collaboration with the shire, via Gabrielle O'Shea, the Biodiversity Officer, in weeding and planting has been essential and is ongoing.

Initially people regularly fed the birds and eels from the jetty with bread, which was bad for the animals' health and polluted the water. A small sign at the end of the jetty, installed by the shire, has been very effective in discouraging this detrimental behaviour. In 2014 the shire added an informative sign, with photos

taken by Margaret Lacey, of eight species of water birds that regularly visit the sanctuary. It had to be replaced as 'Allen' was spelt incorrectly.

These days the sanctuary provides an important habitat for a large number of bush birds and water birds, including the summer migrant, Latham's Snipe, whose conservation status in Victoria is listed as Vulnerable. A pair of Black Swans regularly nests here, and produced five cygnets in early July this year. Other birds such as Eurasian Coots, Purple Swampheens, Dusky Moorhens, and Pacific Black Ducks also raise young in the sanctuary, as do Willie Wagtails on the lower branches of the willows. At quiet times crakes and rails can occasionally be seen running and hiding in the bushes. Some years ago Nankeen Night Herons roosted in the willows on the western bank, and Short-finned Eels are often seen as they search for prey just below the water's surface. In the evenings nearby residents can be almost deafened by the frog chorus. Local residents regularly walk and cycle along the paths. Tourists can be seen stopping to watch the birds from the small jetty, and picnicking at the table. Long may this beautiful community asset continue to flourish and be a showcase of local flora and fauna.

FANS working bees are on the fourth Sunday of the month from March to November, 9.30–11.00 am. Bring a weeding fork and garden gloves. Please contact:

Ellinor Campbell: ellinormary@gmail.com,

Ross Murray: rossandmerle@bigpond.com

Dr Kate Driscoll: kate.driscoll@mit.edu.au





Based on an article by Mary Bremner, with information from Ros Gibson, Kim Neubecker, past AIDA newsletters, *The Echo* and *Groundswell*.

Ellinor Campbell, Coordinator of FANS

Removal of woody weed at Bark Hut Reserve

AIDA has been advised by Jason Eales, Coordinator Parks and Open Space, that:

The Council will be carrying out the removal of a woody weed within the next month at the Bark Hut Reserve in Aireys Inlet. This is to facilitate the renewal of the flagpole located within the reserve (near the corner of Inlet Court and Inlet Crescent).

Surf Coast Shire's Domestic Animal Management Plan

The Shire is seeking the community's help to develop the Domestic Animal Management Plan (DAMP) 2017–21. The DAMP will guide behaviour and actions in the management of cats and dogs (4707 registered dogs and 774 registered cats in the Surf Coast). Whether you're an animal owner or not, the shire would like to hear your views on responsible pet ownership at: <https://www.surfcoastconversations.com.au/DAMP> The survey closes on 18 September.

AIDA meets with Planning Minister

On 12 September Charlotte Allen, Lecki Ord and Ian Godfrey, from the AIDA committee, met with the Minister for Planning, Dick Wynne, and his advisors. We had written to him with our concerns that recent state-wide changes to the provisions for streamlined planning permits, known as 'VicSmart' permits, would limit the community's ability to participate in planning decisions and may over time lead to a deterioration of local character along our coast.

VicSmart permits must be issued within ten days, and while being limited in scope to relatively common and 'minor' developments, i.e. up to \$500,000 in value, they do not include any provision for public advertising or notice, do not allow public objections and do not allow any public appeals to VCAT.

We felt that the meeting was productive, and our proposal that arrangements were required for public evaluation of the longer-term effects of VicSmart, was, we think, positively received. Regarding AIDA's expectations of the increased extent of use of VicSmart planning permits in Aireys Inlet to Eastern View, we were assured that the effect of many of the unusual number of planning scheme overlays in our area and along much of the Great Ocean Road, under which the VicSmart provisions do not currently apply, will effectively override the use of VicSmart in most cases, and the current planning protections and community input in our area will remain.

Charlotte Allen



AIDA meets the Surf Coast Shire

On 15 September seven members of the AIDA committee met for an hour and a half with ward councillor Libby Coker and CEO Keith Baillie; Ransce Salan, General Manager Environment and Development; Anne Howard, General Manager, Governance and Infrastructure; and other shire staff to discuss the Painkalac Valley, the status of the planning permits and issues of compliance with the Conservation Management Plan and Landscape Plan. Issues related to these three items were raised during the recent planning process.

We also discussed other issues, such as planning challenges, proposed improvements along the creek behind the Bottom Shops, mobile phone coverage and black spots, and NBN in the Aireys district.

The meeting was very reassuring and there was much that we agreed on. We are grateful for the willingness of the CEO and council officers to meet with us in a thorough and constructive way. Our other ward councillor, Margot Smith, was an apology.

Charlotte Allen



ANGAIR's Annual Wildflower and Art Weekend

Where Anglesea Memorial Hall, McMillan Street, Anglesea

When Saturday – Sunday 23 and 24 September 10.00 am – 4.00 pm



The ANGAIR Wildflower and Art Weekend returns to Anglesea, just in time for the start of the school holidays.

This year you can discover What's Safe in My Garden? in a display of insects, spiders and scorpions that glow in the dark. Also on show are the Giant Burrowing Cockroach – the world's heaviest – King Meal Worms and the familiar Redback Spider.

Experience the extraordinary natural richness of the area, including more than 100 species of Victoria's ground orchids, and about a quarter of the state's flora – some 620 plant species, two of which occur nowhere else in the world.

The spectacular and comprehensive display of the area's indigenous wildflowers in the Anglesea Memorial Hall will save you a walk. But visitors who want to see the colourful spring wildflowers in their native habitat can take a bus or walking tour of the main sites, led by local experts.

Buy indigenous plants grown by ANGAIR volunteers, second-hand natural history books, art and craft, or enjoy a range of nature-based activities for children.

Local conservation authorities and volunteer groups will display their work. The CFA's exhibit will demonstrate its Phoenix computer modelling system with two fire behaviour models, specially designed for the Anglesea area.

