



AIREYS INLET AND DISTRICT ASSOCIATION INC

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<http://www.aireys-inlet.org>

(Reg. No. A000710V)

11 March 2015

Brendan Walsh
Acting Director Infrastructure
Surf Coast Shire

Dear Brendan,

Re: Proposed Works to Playground at Bark Hut Site, Aireys Inlet.

AIDA has been invited to make a submission to the proposed works on the playground and picnic area at the Bark Hut site in Aireys Inlet, and is pleased to do so.

Our view, and that of the members who have contacted us regarding this proposed development, is that it will impact dramatically on this historic and much loved site. The Bark Hut is one of the few historic markers in Aireys Inlet and as such draws visitors and locals alike to enjoy the tranquility of the area and take away some historical perspective of the early settlers of Aireys Inlet. As such, and for an optimal experience, the area should remain as untouched as possible. Its shaded and protected areas are popular with picnickers and the small grassed area around the hut is used by local activity groups – tai chi, historical re-enactments and carol singing to name a few. The proposed works will impact on all these activities by the addition of gravel pathways and the extension of the play area.

I note in the “Surf Coast Playground Strategy – April 2011” that the number of playgrounds in the Aireys Inlet area is considered well above the industry benchmark, and the Bark Hut playground has a medium rating, which would indicate that there are other playgrounds in the Shire which are more in need of Council attention than this one. AIDA missed the opportunity of comment when the strategy was being developed, and is sorry for not having done so. Had we at that time put in our view, we would have advocated for no change to the Bark Hut area. There is already a large and recently extended playground at the Skate Park in Aireys which is within easy walking distance from the Bark Hut site, and which provides diverse and challenging play equipment for children of all ages. To substantially extend the play equipment and cut into an open space used so much by the local community seems to be a waste of money and destructive of the natural environment. Locals use the Skate Park playground and visitors should be encouraged to do the same. I understand that the grassy area has been deemed “boggy” in the wetter months, but local knowledge would suggest otherwise. There is access to the hut and grounds a short distance from the roadway of Inlet Crescent, and this provides easy access for visitors of all types without the need for gravel pathways.

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Considering the level of opposition to this particular Council proposal, AIDA would submit that the works to the Bark Hut do not proceed and the money allocated for the so called improvements is directed to other playgrounds more in need. We would hope Council will recognise the impact of these works on this historic and much used site and that any loss of area will be to the detriment of the Aireys Inlet community.

Thank you again for the invitation for local input into this issue,

Yours sincerely,

Barbara Fletcher

President

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