



**AIDA's Submission regarding Potential Development at
2 Fraser Drive Aireys Inlet
April 2016**

AIDA is enthusiastic about the prospect of development of older persons' housing at 2 Fraser Drive in Aireys Inlet.

Background

The idea of establishing older persons' housing on the vacant land in Fraser Drive goes back to the 1980s, when the site was purchased by the Barrabool Shire which designated it to be "for the purposes of providing housing units for the aged". The land was sold to the Council by Mrs Isla Stamp, a local resident who had had the same future use in mind. Soon after its purchase the shire negotiated a Federal Government grant for the construction of four social housing units, originally for the elderly, to be situated on part of the site.

The AIDA committee and our membership have been supporters of the concept of completing the original vision since 2000, when a member, a long standing resident, observed that since no additional development of social housing was planned at Fraser Drive the original purpose for the property as older persons' housing should be re-visited. During consultations carried out at the time AIDA was advised by community members that an increasing number of older residents were living alone in family homes which were becoming either too big to manage or were now too far from shops and services for people with reducing mobility. It was seen as making sense to investigate whether, for those who wished to down-size to remain living in Aireys Inlet, part of their existing equity could be used to fund an older persons' housing development for that purpose, on the balance of the land at Fraser Drive.

The Council and AIDA worked in partnership on the project – funding AIDA to direct a professional feasibility study. Council set qualifications for the occupants of the older persons' units, to be included in Section 173 agreements or covenants, as:

- above 60 years of age; and Aireys Inlet district residents; or if no one fits these criteria,
- a Shire resident; or if no one fits these criteria,
- family of Shire residents.

The proposal led to an initial detailed design and financial model for the construction of up to twenty privately owned self-contained units on the site, plus a community garden and house, in addition to the existing social housing units.

AIDA and its members have carried a torch for this project since the early 2000s, and in AIDA's 2015 survey of members' local planning opinions, 75% of the 290 respondents expressed approval of "the provision of housing for older persons, close to the shops".

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AIDA is in no way wedded to the plans developed in 2003 but that process was very helpful in exposing many of the needs, opportunities and challenges associated with any development on the Fraser Drive site. We have provided our views below under the headings requested in Council's community consultation paper.



Connections

The existing connections between the site and the local streets on either side will be a great advantage to older residents, providing easy pedestrian access to and from the Top Shops, the medical centre, the Great Ocean Road bus stops, the community hall and local recreational pathways. Connectivity, and the proximity it provides, are community benefits, particularly for less mobile residents, and should be capitalised on in the development of the site.

It is also important that the development fits into the low key and familiar character of Aireys Inlet and is not a separate enclave requiring restricted or controlled access. Public access through the site from Alice Road to Albert Avenue is not anticipated to generate any more foot traffic than at present but that will if anything assist with neighbourhood safety. The proposed housing should not be seen as in any sense an institutional or aged care facility where residents may benefit from special supervision. That level of care is much more appropriately located elsewhere in the shire, closer to appropriate services.

Design Features

AIDA has always seen this project as an opportunity to establish housing which demonstrates exemplary local residential character. There continue to be a number of local housing subdivisions and developments which have failed to observe the design spirit of Aireys Inlet Neighbourhood Character Study and we believe that such a development, initiated by the community, should demonstrate a high design standard with regard to those principles in the use of building materials, the design of glazed areas, decks and roof forms, as well as the minimisation of overall building height.

A key design principle we have always seen for the older persons' housing development is that it should be made up of, or at least include depending on market research, new down-sized residences for aged existing Aireys Inlet to Eastern View residents. Meeting this need would require smaller houses that can accommodate an aged couple or single person but also allow them to provide hospitality for visits from members of their families. This would require additional bedrooms and living space than, for example, the typical public housing solution for aged housing which is based on a single bedroom household. Also, as a proportion of this housing was envisaged as being funded from existing capital currently tied up in a larger local residence, higher standards of finish and amenity, and to a degree of space standards, would be required to provide an attractive option for down sizing residents.

AIDA would also like to see this as a green development, with the lowest achievable levels of embodied and operating energy — also employing environmentally friendly design principles which provide for low maintenance and comfortable enjoyment by its residents.

Community Garden

The design feasibility schemes developed by AIDA all included a community house and community garden as integral parts of the overall design. We saw facilities of this sort providing a hub for the older persons' housing, helping to establish a sense of community, but not as necessarily being exclusively for its residents' use.

Since then of course, at the request of a local community group the Council permitted the establishment of the existing, broadly based community garden, which is a huge success. Council's permit was for the existing area located close to a more accessible section of the site adjacent to Fraser Drive and removed from the existing social housing units. In the absence of any agreed overall plan at



the time for the development of the land, no account was taken in the siting of the community garden within the overall site of how an eventual housing scheme might best relate to a community garden.

If it was established that it was in the interests of the design and/or economic feasibility of the proposed development AIDA would imagine that the location, shape and/or the site area of the community garden could be modified to suit – but we would be opposed to any proposal that significantly limited the garden.

Housing Density

AIDA examined a variety of density options during its 2003 feasibility study. The private market economic feasibility being examined at the time required, as much as was possible, the maximisation of site density. Achievable density was found to be limited, in the order below, by:

- 1 the location and layout of the existing four social housing units,
- 2 the size and location of the community facilities including the community garden,
- 3 internal car access and parking, and
- 4 the retention of the pedestrian pathway to Albert Avenue.

Because of these constraints all the economically viable schemes required two-storeyed development, in different combinations of attached and semi-detached buildings.

At the time, one of the social housing units was vacant and advice was provided by the Victorian Office of Housing that, because of its lack of locally available health and community services, and also due to lack of local demand for social housing which met the State Government's social housing qualifications criteria, the existing social housing units did not meet current needs. For this reason, at the suggestion of the Office of Housing, the option was explored of replacing the existing units with additional, higher density dwellings as part of the project, and contributing capital proceeds to the provision of replacement social houses located in, say, Torquay, where there was unmet demand for social housing.

For this reason, in addition to designs which retained the four units, alternative options were explored which retained three, two and none of the existing four units. At the time therefore, the preferred plan redeveloped the four social houses as new buildings designed to modern standards, fitting better within the overall development at the same time as increasing the achievable site density. All the alternative schemes were to be completely self-funding, and the project was projected to return a significant surplus to Council.

The plan below illustrates one of the number design alternatives developed at the time – this option being a high density scheme, not ultimately favoured by AIDA, totalling 22 units, which eliminated the footpath to Albert Avenue, provided only minimal community garden facilities and retained two of the four social housing units, shown at the lower left.

This option illustrates the type of attached, semi-detached and two-storeyed development that was being considered at the time. Lower density options, but still higher than typical local development, were also examined, as higher density development in this central part of Aireys Inlet was encouraged in the Planning Scheme.

Following the subsequent adoption of the Aireys Inlet Neighbourhood Character Overlay it may well be that a still lower density plan with, say, 12 to 16 older persons' houses would be considered more appropriate.



Resident Mix

AIDA believes that if supported by established local demand, all new development on the Fraser Drive site should be designed and provided for self-reliant older persons' housing. This was the purpose of the original sale and purchase of the land and still appears to be the over-riding, and strongly growing, unmet demand for small scale housing in Aireys Inlet.

Provision for local older couples and single people who are members of the Aireys Inlet community and who would wish to age in place here alongside their existing friends and neighbours – but for whom there are no suitable local down-sized housing options available – is a very worthwhile Council objective, particularly in our area, where older people make a major contribution to the success of the community.

Demand for Older Persons' Housing in Aireys Inlet

Local aged people are outstripping the rest of the local population at a rapid rate.

Based on the demographic data on Council's website, at the 2006 census 24% of the permanent population of Aireys Inlet, Lorne and Deans Marsh was aged 60 years and over. This age cohort is projected to increase as a proportion of the total local population to 29% by 2021 and to 32% by 2031.

This means that 71% of the overall growth in local population between the years 2006 and 2031 is projected to be aged 60 years or over, while only 29% of this growth will be in the 0 to 59 years age bracket.



39% of the Aireys Inlet, Lorne and Deans Marsh permanent population live in Aireys Inlet to Eastern View and this therefore gives the following projections for the 60+ years population of Aireys Inlet:

Year	Aireys Inlet population aged 60+ years	Increase in local older population in each period
2006	270	
2011	302	+32
2021	398	+96
2031	446	+48

We are not aware of the needs, specifically for housing for local disabled people, but it could be assumed that some of the older persons' demand might include those with some level of disability. For others, it would be beneficial to establish whether those with disabilities requiring special accommodation, who themselves are unable, or who's families or carers are unable to provide suitable residences for them locally, might better live closer to appropriate health or community services.

As discussed under *Housing Density* above, Council and AIDA was earlier advised by the Office of Housing that there was no local demand for state-provided social housing in Aireys Inlet. If this is still so, it may be better to redevelop the existing social housing land on the site as part of the proposed new development – following the natural completion of Council's existing social housing tenancies.

AIDA would be opposed to introducing housing tenants or owners in other categories on this site, such as worker's housing for businesses in Lorne, as had been suggested in recent years by Council. A proposal such as this would fail to address the needs of the local community and would be incompatible with older persons' housing within the Fraser Drive site.

Housing Mix

Based on the objectives and rationale described above for older persons' housing on the Fraser Drive site we believe that development predominantly of two-bedroom dwellings would be appropriate, with some single bedroom units and possibly one or two three-bedroom dwellings — all depending on demand.

A natural mix of dwelling sizes along these lines would also reduce the potentially institutional and undesirable appearance associated with identical dwelling configurations. It is desirable that this be a development of diverse dwellings which blend in with the local area as much as possible.

Ownership Model

While the original economic model for the older persons' housing was based on a private development fully funded by its individual purchasers, AIDA would be happy to see a mix of owned and rental housing in the development if that best meets the community demand.