



AIREYS INLET AND DISTRICT ASSOCIATION INC

PO BOX 359 AIREYS INLET VICTORIA 3231

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

(Reg. No. A000710V)

9 April 2015

Ms Leanne Lucas
Surf Coast Shire
TORQUAY

Dear Ms Lucas,

Re: Submission on the Review of the Surf Coast Shire's Open Space Strategy

The Aireys Inlet and District Association has a strong interest in all planning matters that affect the Aireys Inlet to Eastern View district, as this is the main reason AIDA was formed by local residents and property owners 50 years ago.

AIDA is pleased to have the opportunity to be involved in the review of the Shire's Open Space Strategy and to provide some information about our community's opinions and expectations with regard to open space.

We appreciate the analysis of open space in the Shire being broken into a seven distinct precincts. The Aireys Inlet Precinct – that includes the townships of Aireys Inlet, Fairhaven, Moggs Creek and Eastern View – is the area of AIDA's remit.

We would like to emphasise that what might be considered desirable in one area may not be appropriate in another and ask that the 'walking village' character of the Aireys Inlet Precinct is recognised, protected and enhanced in the revised Open Space Strategy. AIDA would not support the incorporation of templates that cover all precincts.

The Ross Planning Report provides excellent information about the benefits of open space, the need to consider demographics, emerging trends and the demands and considerations for council.

AIDA has taken these wider issues into account for its submission that relates to the area identified in the Ross Planning Report as the Aireys Inlet Precinct.

The Eastern View to Urquhart Bluff area is blessed by the amount and diversity of its open space and by the variety of recreational opportunities this provides. Many of these do not rely on the foreshore and beach. It has –

- extensive and diverse beaches,
- a protected inlet for water play and swimming for children of all ages,
- cliff top walks,
- parks for bush walking, cycling and horse riding,
- pathways and shared roadways for pedestrians and joggers,
- fishing and boating on the Painkalac Creek,
- pathways for cycling,
- a bird hide and excellent bird watching opportunities
- two playgrounds,
- a skate park and
- tennis courts and an indoor recreational facility.

We note that the Ross Planning Report states that the Aireys Precinct has 5% of the Shire's total population, but 12% of the Shire's total land area classified as open space excluding GORCC, Parks Victoria and DEPI lands. The area has also been nominated by the report as likely to experience limited population growth on current population trends. This would seem to indicate that our area is well provided with open space and there is likely to be limited justification for the Shire to invest in major new facilities in the area.

In January and February 2015 AIDA carried out a survey of its members (almost 400) to determine their attitudes to a number of local issues. This was a repeat of surveys done in December 1983, October 1990 and October 1999. The 30year longitudinal survey results demonstrate a remarkable consistency in community views and it is worth noting that the 1990 and 1999 surveys used the Shire's database to survey the whole district. The full 30 year longitudinal survey results are attached to this submission and questions 1, 3, 7, 8, 10, 11, 13 are of most relevance to open space and recreational facilities.

One of the questions in these surveys – 'Which additional recreational developments would you favour in the area?' - is of direct relevance to the review of the Open Space Strategy.

The full 2015 survey is also attached with respondent's comments. The questions of most relevance are 1, 6, 7, 9, 10, 12 and 15.

The AIDA surveys have consistently indicated that the Aireys Inlet area is highly valued for its high environmental qualities and informal, 'walking village' atmosphere, diversity of walking tracks and pathways and the shared roadways and lack of formal footpaths. The revised Open Space Strategy could include recommendations for additional walking tracks such as-

- A path adjacent to the Painkalac Creek from Butlers Bend to Old Coach Road. This path has the Shire's support and funding.
- A path from the ironbarks at the end of Wright St to Eagle Rock Parade. Part of this path already exists – the part from Wright St to Aireys St.
- A spectacular walk could be developed between Fairhaven and Moggs Creek, along the top of the cliff overlooking the Great Ocean Road and Bass Strait. (The Shire would need to acquire some land to make it happen.)

There is potential for the Aireys Inlet Precinct to gain further open space following Barwon Water's decision to decommission the Painkalac Reservoir and source water for Aireys Inlet and Fairhaven from its Anglesea supply system.

Barwon Water has established a reference group that includes community members and the Surf Coast Shire to consider potential recreational uses of the reservoir. This committee has just begun its deliberations, but there are a number of potential uses that will meet the criterion noted in the Ross Report where development is encouraged inland of the beach and foreshore.

While not specifically mentioned in the Ross Planning Report, AIDA notes that the January council minutes – when council considered the report - states that the issue of an oval in the Aireys area is likely to be raised as a 'gap' in our infrastructure. The question of an oval has been raised on and off over the past 35 years and neither an economic or demand-based case has ever been established. Aireys Inlet, Fairhaven, Moggs Creek and Eastern View can be considered as satellite settlements of Anglesea or Lorne where major recreational facilities are based.

The AIDA survey results have been consistent in the responses that relate to the development of a sports oval with the most recent survey showing 60% do not want an oval in the area, and certainly not in the Painkalac Valley. AIDA wrote to the Mayor on 3 March, 2015 about the issue of an oval in the area as it has been raised in relation to the new structure plan being developed for our area.

The Ross Planning Report notes (p24, dot point 3) that "There is limited information available to the public on open spaces and natural areas". AIDA would encourage that no recommendation be made to install more signs in our district as a way of conveying that information. A point that comes out loud and clear from the AIDA community consultations is the community's dislike for the proliferation of signs.

The report also encourages enhanced connectivity and linkages (see p26). This is supported by recommendations from the Axos consultancy dealing with the Aireys Inlet to Eastern View Structure Plan. Axos considered that a path connecting the Top Shops and Bottom Shops precincts as well as the nearby recreation spaces was highly desirable. And also important for our community's connectivity are Great Ocean Road pedestrian crossings, especially a safe crossing from the Skate Park to the Bottom Shops and Painkalac Creek pathway.

On p26 there is a section about "understanding demand". As has been noted, some of our coastal reserves fall under the authority of bodies other than the Shire, although we believe that they generally work well together. GORCC manages 37km of coastal reserve, including land on the cliffs and dunes from Aireys Inlet to Eastern View. It should be noted that GORCC collaborates with the Victorian Coastal Council to determine the carrying capacity of the coastal Crown Lands.

It is AIDA's understanding that, although the Friends of the Sanctuary assist with activities like planting and weeding, the Shire is primarily responsible for the maintenance of the Allen Noble Sanctuary. AIDA has expressed concern that water plants are choking the water that is an important "open space" habitat for the wide diversity of birdlife. We believe that it is necessary to reduce the coverage of these plants to allow the birds to prosper, as was the original intention when the sanctuary was established. Noticeable to residents, was the failure, apparently due to lack of open water, of the pair of black swans to breed at the sanctuary this year.

Our community is passionate about this district and that includes our open spaces. When something is proposed to be done in these spaces (eg a new path, a new swing)- even something that appears to be insignificant or very cheap and quick to complete – AIDA strongly encourages that consultation with the community takes place before any works are done.

AIDA looks forward to further opportunities to be involved in the review of the open space strategy.

Yours sincerely

Barbara A Fletcher
President