



AIREYS INLET AND DISTRICT ASSOCIATION INC

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

(Reg. No. A000710V)

7 May 2015

Rochelle Griffith
Community Engagement Officer
Surf Coast Shire

Dear Rochelle

Aireys Inlet and District Association's submission to the Surf Coast Shire's draft Communications and Community Engagement Strategy

AIDA supports the development of a Communications and Community Engagement Strategy for the Shire and its commitment to keeping the community informed and involved in decision-making. AIDA has been a strong advocate for the area from Urquhart Bluff to Eastern View for fifty years. Its remit is to protect and enhance the village atmosphere of our communities and the environmental qualities that make our part of the coast special.

During these fifty years AIDA has worked closely and cooperatively with the Shire on planning and policy issues. We see the development of the Communications and Community Engagement Strategy as an opportunity to strengthen and improve AIDA's capacity to work with the council as decisions are made which have the potential to impact on our community.

AIDA welcomes the council's commitment 'to be seen as a key driver in advocating for local interests' and the opportunity this presents for AIDA and the council to work together to provide council with ongoing guidance about our community's vision for the Aireys Inlet area.

We assume that this commitment will build on and strengthen the status of existing plans, such as the Neighbourhood Character Overlay, for Aireys Inlet and district and the structure plan currently being developed.

AIDA fully supports the Shire's four fundamental beliefs and commitment to being trustworthy, responsive, simple and progressive and its approach to public participation.

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We recognise that few communities have a strong local resident's group such as AIDA. We note that the 'Example Techniques' does not include local community groups and request that 'local community groups such as AIDA' be included.

We also support the Shire's recognition that it has nine distinct townships (Aireys Inlet and Fairhaven each being one) and that each has a strong sense of community and identity and we agree that no single approach will fit all people or circumstances.

Although AIDA has been able to work well with the Shire there have been times when the information flow has not been good and our capacity to be involved in decision-making has been compromised. Sometimes this has been because we were not informed about planning or policy developments and sometimes it has been due to a blanket 'all of Shire' template approach to an issue. At other times, it has seemed to us that decisions have been made without a strong corporate memory of previous Council decisions recognising the specific nature of the Aireys Inlet district and the clearly expressed wishes of its residents. This has particularly been the case on matters ranging from any development in the Painkalac Valley to the sealing of roads.

There have also been times when we, as a busy volunteer committee, have been overloaded with many important initiatives that we want to address but they occur nearly simultaneously and with tight deadlines. In recent times we have faced responding to the area's structure plan, open spaces strategy and 3 amendments to the planning scheme – all aspects that we consider important for AIDA to address. A better spacing or longer response time would be helpful.

The concept of working with the individual townships is picked up in the draft plan under 'Major Initiatives' and 'How We Will Achieve Our Objectives'. AIDA believes the importance of considering local communities, their identities and that different approaches are needed should be recognised in the Key Challenges section. AIDA suggests a statement such as 'Ensure local communities are engaged about local issues' be included.

AIDA would be interested in hearing more about what is planned for the community group you intend to establish as part of the engagement plan.

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on the draft plan and we look forward to continue working with council.

Yours sincerely

Charlotte Allen
AIDA President