

AIREYS INLET TO EASTERN VIEW

PLANNING FOR THE FUTURE



STRUCTURE PLAN

FINAL - NOVEMBER 2015



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All photos in this document by Surf Coast Shire Council and AXOS Urban, unless otherwise noted.

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Executive Summary

The Aireys Inlet to Eastern View Structure Plan has been prepared to guide future land use and development to ensure the low key coastal character, natural values and distinct qualities of the towns are preserved and enhanced for current and future generations of residents and visitors.

It provides an overarching vision and supporting principles for future development and sets directions for housing, community and recreation facilities, environmental protection, commercial development and tourism, and infrastructure requirements to plan for and respond to community needs and aspirations.

KEY DIRECTIONS

1. Contain the townships within their existing settlement boundaries to protect the surrounding environmentally significant land and retain buffers to the Great Otway National Park.
2. Protect and enhance the environmental assets within and surrounding the towns to maintain the area's natural beauty and attractive setting.
3. Protect and enhance the small scale, low-key, informal, non-suburban, vegetated coastal village character of the towns.
4. Facilitate modest infill development within the defined settlement boundaries that is sensitive to the vegetated coastal landscape setting of the towns.
5. Encourage the provision of a diverse range of accommodation and housing options, in particular well designed compact low maintenance dwellings suitable for older residents within walking distance of community and commercial facilities.
6. Contain commercial development within the existing boundaries of the Top and Bottom Shops, providing for viable and attractive centres with a diverse range of commercial activities, adequate car parking, good pedestrian/bicycle access and opportunities for incremental growth.
7. Support a sustainable local tourism industry, while managing the pressure of large visitor numbers to minimise any detrimental environmental and amenity impacts and recognising the impact of peak summer periods and bushfire risk.
8. Maintain a variety of accessible community, recreation and open space facilities which meet community needs.
9. Maintain and build an integrated network of safe, connected and accessible pedestrian and cycle pathways throughout and between the towns, linking the commercial centres, community facilities, recreation and open space areas, and coastal and hinterland walking trails.
10. Apply appropriate mitigation and adaptation strategies to avoid and minimise the impacts of environmental risks (in particular bushfire and climate change).

KEY ACTIONS

[numbers refer to pages in report where issue is discussed]

1. Facilitate the redevelopment of 2 Fraser Drive for higher density housing suitable for older persons and incorporate the community garden on the site. [23, 27]
2. Not progress the development of an active recreation space in the Painkalac Creek Valley, but investigate the opportunity for enhancement of the primary school oval for recreational use and continue to facilitate the sharing of sports facilities in Lorne, Anglesea, Bellbrae and Torquay. [29-30]
3. Work with GORCC, VicRoads and affected landowners to address the environmental, traffic and amenity impacts of large visitor numbers at the Great Ocean Road Memorial Arch at Eastern View. [39]
4. Prepare a master plan for the Anderson Roadknight Reserve / Community Hall to guide future community and recreational use of the site. [28]
5. Construct a pedestrian refuge on the Great Ocean Road between the Bottom Shops and the playground/skate park. [31]



6. Construct a pathway linking the Bottom Shops with Old Coach Road via River Reserve Road and Bambra Road and provide a continuous pathway between the Top and Bottom Shops. [31]
7. Continue to apply minimum lot sizes and restrictive development controls to protect the character of the towns. [22]
8. Continue to include private land outside the settlement boundaries within the Rural Conservation Zone and discourage any use and development that would compromise the natural values or increase bushfire risk. [21]
9. Implement the recommendations of the Urban Design Framework (2015) and Urban Design Guidelines (2011) for the Top and Bottom Shops to increase their attractiveness and improve car parking and pedestrian access. [35]
10. Recognise the importance to the community of the Aireys Pub as a social focal point and consider future opportunities for additional tourist-oriented uses. [37]
11. Investigate the feasibility of undergrounding powerlines along sections of the Great Ocean Road to enhance the scenic landscape qualities, reduce fire risk and improve safety for motorists and hang/para-gliders. [39]
12. Request VicRoads to apply seasonal speed limits of 50 km/h between Boundary Road, Aireys Inlet and SLSC in Fairhaven and 60 km/h between Eastern View and Fairhaven. [32]
13. In cooperation with GORCC monitor the use, capacity and operation of coastal/beach car parks to establish whether any changes or improvements are required. [33]

1. Introduction

1.1 BACKGROUND

Located on the world renowned Great Ocean Road between Torquay and Lorne, the townships of Aireys Inlet, Fairhaven, Moggs Creek and Eastern View are celebrated for their unique natural features and relaxed coastal village lifestyle. The towns have a relatively small permanent population, but are very popular as a holiday destination.

The *Aireys Inlet to Eastern View Structure Plan* has been prepared to guide future land use and development to ensure the low key coastal character, natural values and distinct qualities of the towns are preserved and enhanced so that they remain great places to live, work, play and visit for both current and future generations of residents and visitors.

The previous Structure Plan for Aireys Inlet to Eastern View was adopted in 1993 by the former Geelong Regional Commission and Barrabool Shire Council. A number of key drivers provide the impetus for developing a new plan. These include:

- The need to reconfirm, or otherwise, the current vision and planning policy framework for Aireys Inlet to Eastern View.
- The need to respond to current and future community needs and aspirations, e.g. around housing, community facilities, open space and infrastructure.
- The need to respond to and manage growing visitation to the Great Ocean Road Region.

An Urban Design Framework (UDF) for the Top and Bottom Shops in Aireys Inlet has also been prepared as part of the project to guide appropriate development and public realm improvements, including landscaping, car parking, pedestrian movement and access, and links to surrounding areas.

Aireys Inlet to Eastern View Planning for the Future embraces a place-making approach to ensure the values, needs and aspirations of the local community are reflected in the plan and inform local, site specific solutions that foster and build on the towns' strong sense of community and identity.

Whilst some modest further growth and change can be expected, no outward expansion of the existing town boundaries is contemplated.

1.2 PURPOSE OF THE STRUCTURE PLAN

The Structure Plan is a 20 year high level strategic planning document developed through an extensive community engagement process. It provides an overarching vision and supporting principles for future land use and development and sets directions for housing, community and recreation facilities, environmental protection, commercial development and tourism, and infrastructure requirements to plan for and respond to community needs and aspirations. The plan will serve as a policy document to guide decision-making by Council and a range of government agencies, service providers, landowners, developers and the general public. The accompanying implementation plan details how this plan will be implemented.



1.3 COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

The process of developing the Structure Plan involved extensive consultation with the local community, relevant government agencies and other stakeholders to ensure their needs and aspirations are reflected in the ensuing plan.

Council appointed consultants AXOS Urban spent eleven days in the townships from 24 January to 3 February 2015 to embed themselves in the community to understand the local context, issues and aspirations of both the resident and holiday population. More than



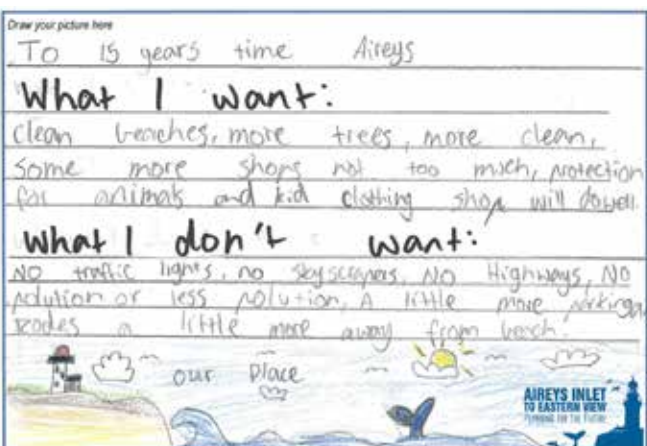
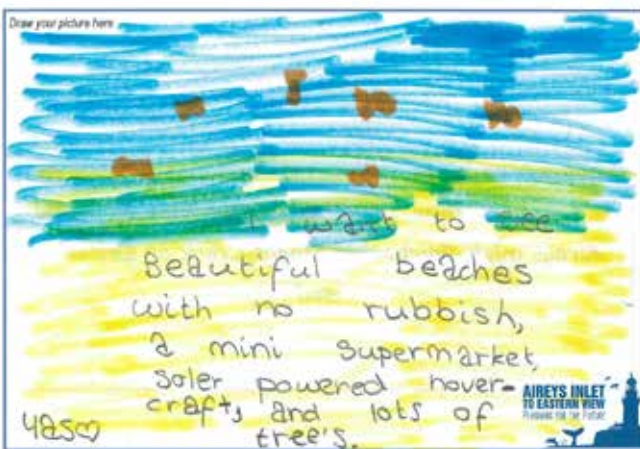
500 people, including permanent and non-permanent residents, visitors and traders participated in the first two phases of community engagement, contributing ideas via surveys (online and hard copy), written submissions, workshops, meetings, informal conversations and interviews. In addition, a workshop was held with Year 5 and 6 students of the Aireys Inlet Primary School to draw "postcards from the future".

The aim was to understand what it is that people love about the area, the key issues facing the towns and what the community would like Aireys Inlet to Eastern View to look and feel like in the future. The general outcomes, themes and emerging directions identified through the

community engagement and background analysis have been captured in two Summary of Findings reports and a background report.

The findings were used to draft the Aireys Inlet to Eastern View Planning for the Future - Vision and Principles, which was released for comment before Council adopted it in April 2015.

A third round of community engagement was undertaken in June 2015 to help draft the Structure Plan and Urban Design Framework. The draft plans were placed on public exhibition in August-September 2015 to enable community and stakeholder feedback, prior to adoption by Council.



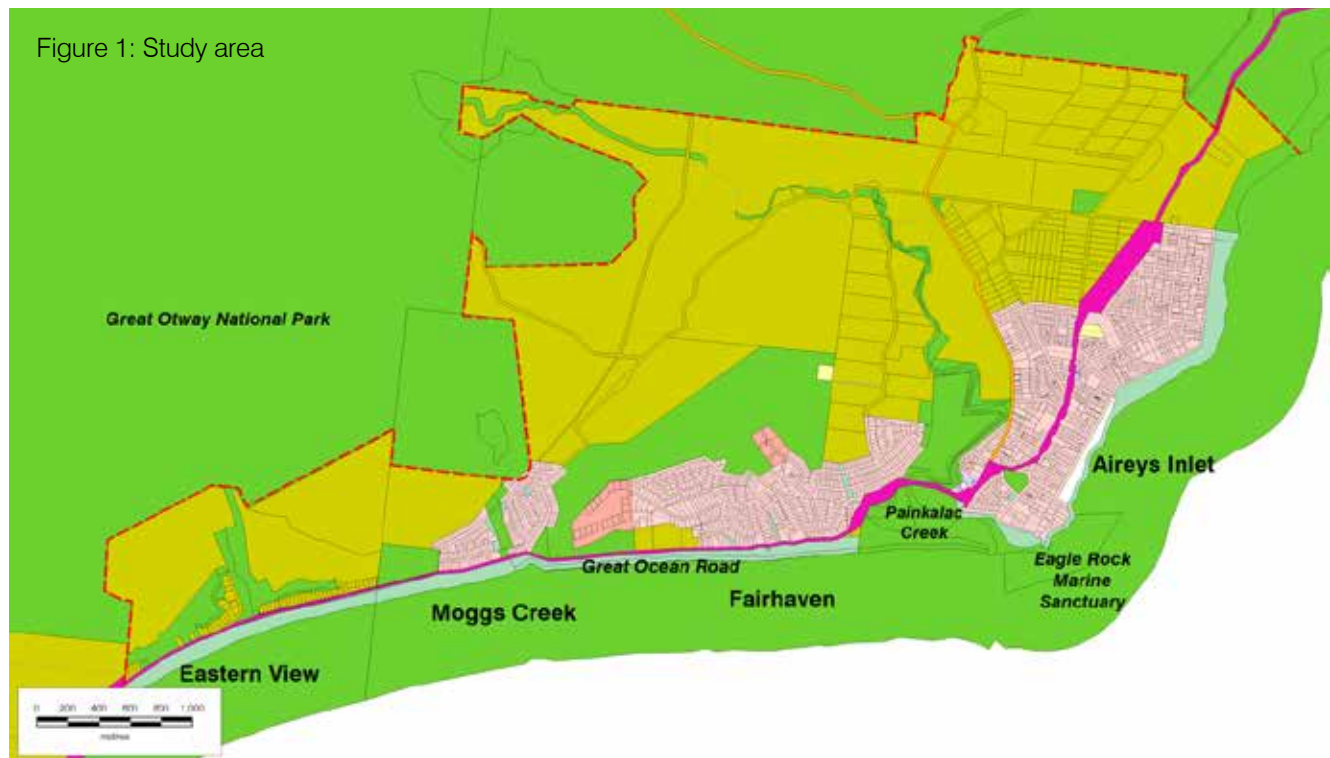
Postcards from the Future by Aireys Inlet Primary School students

1.4 STUDY AREA

The coastal settlements of Aireys Inlet, Fairhaven, Moggs Creek and Eastern View are situated along the Great Ocean Road between Anglesea and Lorne – approximately 120km south-west of Melbourne and 45km from Geelong. The settlements are enclosed by dense bushland and spectacular coastline, nestled between the Great Otway National Park and Bass Strait.

The Structure Plan study area is delineated by the dashed line shown on Figure 1. It includes the four settlements and the immediate hinterland, which includes many large bush blocks held in private ownership.

The next section provides a summary of the findings of the background analysis and community engagement undertaken for the first two phases of Aireys Inlet to Eastern View Planning for the Future. Further details can be found in the *Phase 1: Understanding Places Background Report* (April 2015) and the *Phase 1: Understanding Places* and *Phase 2: Visioning Summary of Findings Reports* by AXOS Urban.



Commercial

C1Z Commercial 1 Zone

Public Land

PCRZ Public Conservation And Resource Zone

PPRZ Public Park And Recreation Zone

PUZ1 Public Use Zone - Service And Utility

RDZ1 Road Zone - Category 1

RDZ2 Road Zone - Category 2

Residential

GRZ1 General Residential Zone - Schedule 1

LDRZ Low Density Residential Zone

Rural

RCZ Rural Conservation Zone

2. Aireys Inlet to Eastern View at a glance

2.1 STRATEGIC PLANNING CONTEXT

In a regional planning context the settlements of Aireys Inlet to Eastern View do not play any significant role in absorbing the growth targets for the region (500,000 people by 2050). The *G21 Regional Growth Plan* (2013) directs growth to existing district towns (including Torquay), new targeted growth nodes at Colac and Winchelsea, and in the longer term two further investigation areas in Geelong. The region's smaller rural and coastal settlements will continue to experience modest growth from the take-up of holiday homes, infill development and demographic changes.

“Our desire to be near and visit the coast creates pressure on the very aesthetic, cultural and environmental values which attract us. Careful planning is required to meet these growing demands in a way that preserves the significant natural values and ecosystems of the coast.” (VCS, 2014)

The *Great Ocean Road Region – A Land Use and Transport Strategy* (DSE, 2004) and the *Victorian Coastal Strategy* (VCC, 2014) define Aireys Inlet as a “coastal settlement” where the character of the town should be respected. Both strategies recognise the impacts of population growth and increasing visitation on coastal areas and communities and the need to manage these impacts in a manner that does not destroy the values that attracted people in the first place.

The *Surf Coast Planning Scheme* directs growth within the Surf Coast Shire to Torquay-Jan Juc and Winchelsea and limits growth in the small coastal towns to protect the individual coastal township character values of low urban density, recessive built form, vegetated coastal landscapes and ecological values from inappropriate urban development. The Scheme recognises that the townships of Aireys Inlet to Eastern View have limited growth opportunities due to environmental and physical limitations and the desire to protect and enhance the preferred neighbourhood character. Residential

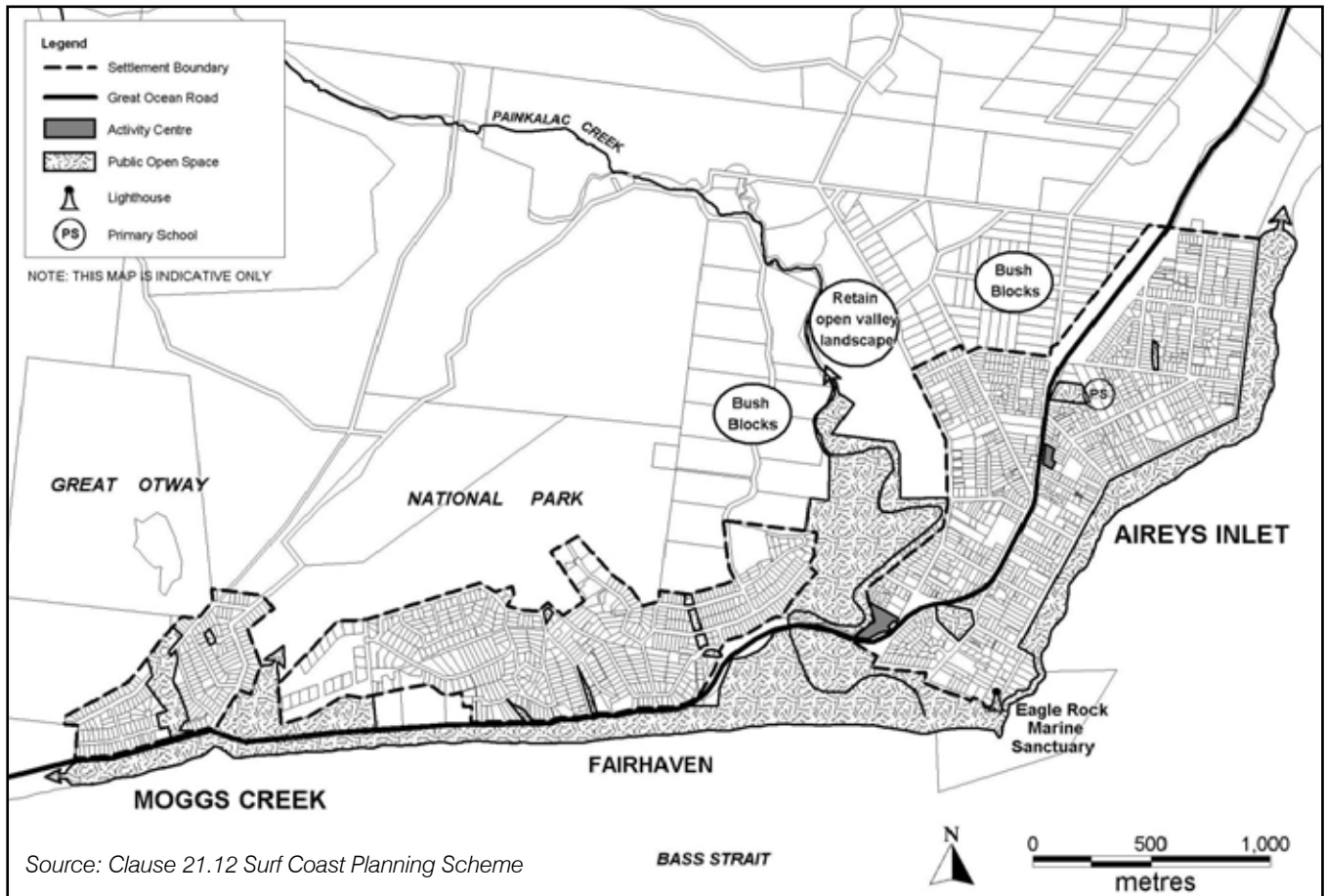
development is to be confined to the defined urban boundaries as depicted on the *'Aireys Inlet to Eastern View Framework Map'* at Clause 21.12 (refer Figure 2). The larger bush blocks outside the town boundaries are to be retained as buffers to the surrounding forest and National Park.

Residential development within the settlement boundaries is guided by a suite of planning overlays that were introduced in 2006 to give effect to the recommendations of the *Aireys Inlet to Eastern View Neighbourhood Character Study and Vegetation Assessment* (Surf Coast Shire, 2004). These include the *Neighbourhood Character Overlay Schedule 1* (NCO1), *Design and Development Overlay Schedule 10* (DDO10) and *Environmental Significance Overlay Schedule 4* (ESO4). In summary, the overlays aim to:

- Control the design, siting, scale and height of buildings through the application of varied ResCode standards to ensure sufficient space is provided around buildings to retain vegetation or provide opportunities for the planting of vegetation, and to ensure buildings are not visually prominent due to their scale or height.
- Control fencing by requiring a permit for all fencing other than post and wire to reinforce the generally open, unfenced character of the townships.
- Control subdivision through the application of minimum lot sizes to ensure lots are large enough to retain or plant vegetation and to accommodate dwellings that meet the neighbourhood character objectives.
- Control vegetation removal to avoid or minimise the loss of vegetation, and to require replanting where vegetation is removed.

Combined the overlays seek to protect the towns' distinct low scale, low density, vegetated coastal character as defined by the Neighbourhood Character Study.

Figure 2: Aireys Inlet to Eastern View Framework Map



2.2 SNAPSHOT OF AIREYS INLET TO EASTERN VIEW



POPULATION^a

Resident population	1,071
Peak overnight population ^c	8,173
Average household size	2.4
Median resident age	47
Forecast population (2031) ^e	1,245



HOUSING^a

Dwellings	1,505
Occupancy rate (Surf Coast Shire 66%)	25%
Vacant lots ^b	199
Housing types:	
Separate dwellings	96.3%
Units/townhouses	1.9%
Median monthly mortgage repayments	\$1,365
Median weekly rent	\$200
Median house price:^d	
Aireys Inlet	\$665,500
Fairhaven	\$781,500
Surf Coast Shire	\$587,000



EMPLOYMENT^a

INDUSTRY

Construction	7.1%
Education	6.9%
Accommodation	6.0%

OCCUPATION

Professionals	29.9%
Technicians and Trades Workers	15.9%
Managers	15.7%



ECONOMY^f

The local economy is strongly focused on tourism, with 20% of retail sales from residents and 80% from visitors.

There is approx. 2,575m² of retail space and 1,100m² of commercial floorspace in Aireys Inlet.

The Top Shops in Aireys Inlet have a predominantly local focus, while the Bottom Shops have a visitor and tourism focus.

The existing centres, in particular the Bottom Shops, can accommodate demand for future commercial activity by development of vacant or under-utilised parcels.

There is a high level of escape expenditure to larger centres (82%).



COMMUNITY AND RECREATION

The towns have a basic range of community facilities, including a primary school, multi-purpose community hall, tennis courts, church, medical centre, community garden, surf lifesaving club, skate park and three playgrounds.

Although the towns are well provided with open space and passive recreation opportunities, Aireys Inlet does not have a formal recreation reserve for active recreation and competitive sports.

Community, recreation and sports facilities unavailable in Aireys Inlet are typically accessed in Anglesea, Lorne, Torquay or Geelong.



NATURAL ENVIRONMENT

ASSETS:

Surf and family beaches, sand dunes and cliffs, Painkalac Creek and estuary, Great Otway National Park, Eagle Rock Marine Sanctuary, indigenous vegetation cover, native fauna.

RISKS:

Extreme bushfire risk, coastal processes related to climate change (inundation, erosion), weeds, pest animals, coastal acid sulfate soils.

The towns and surrounding hinterland and coastal reserves feature the Ecological Vegetation Classes (EVCs) Heathy Woodland, Coastal Moonah Woodland, Shrubby Dry Forest, Coastal Dune Scrub Mosaic and Coastal Tussock Grassland, which support a vast range of threatened flora and fauna species.



TRANSPORT AND PHYSICAL INFRASTRUCTURE

The Great Ocean Road is the main arterial road through the towns and is at capacity during peak holiday periods, creating impediments to local traffic and pedestrian movement. Car parking at the shopping centres and popular beaches is at a premium during these periods, but mostly sufficient for the remainder of the year.

Public transport is limited to V-Line bus services providing infrequent connections to Geelong and Apollo Bay.

A network of scenic walking trails, including the Surf Coast Walk, provides opportunities for active lifestyles and access to services and natural features.

Aireys Inlet and Fairhaven's water supply is being connected to the Geelong water supply network via

a pipeline from Anglesea to replace the old water treatment plant which serviced the towns since 1989.

Painkalac Reservoir will be maintained for firefighting purposes and to ensure continued environmental flows into Painkalac Creek. A community and agency group is considering potential future public uses of Painkalac Reservoir.



HISTORY AND CULTURAL HERITAGE

The Painkalac Creek formed the boundary between the Wada wurrung or Wathaurong people east of the creek and the Gadubanud people to the west. The area contains important cultural heritage sites, including middens along the estuary and sand dunes. Escaped convict William Buckley lived with Aborigines in the area prior to European settlement.

The Split Point Lighthouse at Aireys Inlet, constructed in 1891, and the Great Ocean Road Memorial Arch at Eastern View, first constructed in 1939, are recognisable landmarks and popular tourist draw cards.

The Great Ocean Road is listed on the National Heritage List for its significance as a war memorial for World War I servicemen, its role as a recreational tourism route unlocking spectacular coastal vistas and adjacent landscapes, and its scenic environmental values.

The 1983 Ash Wednesday bushfires were a defining moment in the towns' history. The fires all but destroyed the townships. Much of the building stock was lost and has since then been rebuilt.

Sources:

- ABS 2011 Census Quickstats – Aireys Inlet-Fairhaven (UCL) – usual residents
- Count by Surf Coast Shire, January 2015
- Economic Indicators Bulletin, Enterprise Geelong, 2013
- A Guide to Property Values, DTPLI, 2013
- Based on .Id Forecast
- Tim Nott, 2014
- Surf Coast Shire Visitor Insights 2014



TOURISM AND EVENTS^g

Over 50% of overnight visitors stay in holiday homes, with only a minority in holiday/tourist accommodation (e.g. hotel/motel, caravan park).

Aireys Inlet is becoming vastly recognised as a flourishing live music and literary hub, with events such as the Festival of Words and the Open Mic Music Festival.

The January-March quarter is the most popular time for day trip and overnight visitation.

The most popular activities for day visitors to the Lorne-Anglesea district were going to the beach and eating out at restaurants. 66% percent of visitors came from Melbourne.

The Lorne-Anglesea district is within Victoria's top 10 regional destinations for overnight visitors.



LOCAL CHARACTER

The towns have a distinctive low density, non-suburban vegetated coastal character. The built form is visually recessive and dominated by the indigenous vegetation cover. It is characterised by:

Low profile buildings screened by vegetation and contained within the tree canopy.

The use of natural materials and colours that assist in blending housing with the natural surroundings.

A sense of space around buildings due to generous setbacks from property boundaries and limited hard surfaces.

A sense of openness between properties due to the absence of solid fencing, the use of post and wire fences or no fences at all.

Roads with an informal appearance complemented by roadside vegetation and a lack of formal footpaths and concrete kerbing.

“What I love about Aireys Inlet is the quiet small community atmosphere and the informal character of the town..., the gravel roads and the dominance of landscape features and vegetation over built form. I also love the proximity of the town to the beach, Painkalac Valley, National Park and other public spaces that provide opportunities for informal outdoor nature based recreation.”

2.3 COMMUNITY VIEWS AND ASPIRATIONS

The first phases of community engagement undertaken for the Structure Plan provided insights into what permanent and non-permanent residents, visitors and traders value most about the towns, what their concerns are and what their aspirations are for the future. Following is a snapshot of what we heard.



WHAT WE LOVE ABOUT OUR TOWNS....

- The informal, small scale, vegetated **coastal village character** with few basic urban amenities. People appreciate the sense of community and friendly feel and love how the natural environment and landscape dominate over the built form. Other valued characteristics are the low profile buildings nestled in vegetation, space around properties, a coastal building style, views of the ocean and surrounding landscape features, the dark night sky, informal roads that are shared by pedestrians and vehicles, and a lack of fencing. Many people wish to see the towns remain relatively unchanged and not expand beyond their existing boundaries, with only limited development and incremental improvements. Any necessary development or infrastructure should be high quality, low key, sensitively built and have minimal impact on the environment.
- The towns' strong visual and physical connection to the unspoilt, diverse **natural environment** comprised of the beaches, ocean, coast, bush, creek, estuary, valley, national park and indigenous vegetation. These significant natural assets and landscapes frame and infuse the settlements, defining their identity and sense of place, and providing lifestyle, recreation and tourism opportunities. They make a significant contribution to biodiversity and the liveability that attracts residents and visitors.
- The natural and relatively undeveloped state of **public open spaces** throughout the district and the role they play in providing opportunities for informal nature and water based recreation (e.g. surfing, swimming, walking, cycling, horse riding, kayaking, rock rambling, fishing), contributing to health and wellbeing, and connecting the community (e.g. as a place to meet, interact and socialise with other people).
- The level of **services and facilities** in the towns – the shops, cafes and restaurants, community hall, community garden, primary school, tennis courts, medical centre, SLSC. Most people are quite happy to travel to nearby towns for services that are unavailable. Most people do not see a need for expansion of the commercial centres, but did have views about the type of shops they would like to see. Most people prefer authentic, local, fresh, gourmet, boutique products and experiences as opposed to national retail chains, franchises and generic goods. There is only limited support for a supermarket, but a food store – as previously existed – is seen by many as something that would add value to increase the availability of grocery and fresh food items. The year round viability of businesses is a concern, with shops and cafes often closed several days a week in the off-peak season. People love the different activities and events (e.g. Open Mic Festival, Literary Fest) throughout the year, bringing a mix of locals and visitors together and enlivening the towns in the quieter months.

“I love Aireys and surrounding areas as they are and am loathe to see too much more development or ‘grooming’ of our townships. We are not Torquay, Anglesea or Lorne, and should not aspire to be.”



OUR CONCERNS....

- Adverse impacts of development and infrastructure on the area’s natural environment and informal coastal character. People expressed a desire to leave the towns the way they are and not to become another Torquay, Anglesea or Lorne. Some people considered that stricter and more consistent application of planning controls are required to avoid overdevelopment and consequent irreversible impacts on the local character and biodiversity.
- Visual impacts of infrastructure and the gradual erosion of the informal character through the provision of ‘urban’ infrastructure, for example sealed roads and concrete footpaths. Overhead powerlines were also seen to detract from the visual qualities of the area and an added fire risk. Others however saw the lack of sealed roads as needing fixing to reduce dust and maintenance requirements and to improve traffic safety.
- Impacts of large visitor numbers on the natural environment and local amenity of residents. Large tourist numbers at the Great Ocean Road Memorial Arch at Eastern View were mentioned as a major issue, particularly in light of the lack of visitor facilities at the site (e.g. toilets and rubbish bins) and the traffic safety implications from a large number of tour coaches, mini buses, vans and other tourist vehicles that visit the site on a daily basis.
- Loss of native vegetation as a result of clearing for development and bushfire protection measures.
- High bushfire risk, limited emergency exit routes, large visitor numbers on high fire risk days, traffic congestion, telecommunications blackspots and lack of alternative neighbourhood safer places.
- Traffic congestion on the Great Ocean Road and a lack of car parking at the shopping centres during peak holiday periods.
- Limited bus services, which makes it hard for people without a car to travel to other towns to access services.
- Some people saw the lack of a dedicated recreation oval as an issue for the town, depriving in particular younger generations of the possibility to participate in active sports locally, whereas other people were strongly opposed to the provision of any oval, particularly within the Painkalac Creek Valley.



3. Vision and Principles

The vision articulates the preferred long-term future for Aireys Inlet to Eastern View and has been prepared to ensure that any changes and development are informed by the values and aspirations of the community. The vision is supported by a series of principles based around four main themes to help achieve the preferred future.

AIREYS INLET TO EASTERN VIEW VISION

“To respect, preserve and enhance the natural environment and coastal village character for the enjoyment of both current and future generations of residents and visitors”

Aireys Inlet, Fairhaven, Moggs Creek and Eastern View continue to be enjoyed by residents and visitors alike for their small coastal village character, informal look and feel, and natural beauty. The unspoilt natural environment of bush, beach, coastal cliffs, creek, estuary, valley and national park, together with the locally indigenous flora and fauna and unilluminated night skies, remains the pre-eminent theme of everyone’s experience.

The towns are quiet and peaceful places for those wishing to get away from it all on a permanent, semi-permanent or short-term basis - a great escape from city living, an alternative to more intensely developed coastal towns elsewhere in the region and a unique area as part of the Great Ocean Road.

They are ‘living towns’ with opportunities for both residents and visitors of all ages, with all necessary amenities on hand or close by. Places where residents and visitors can walk safely to appreciate its natural attractions and community assets.

NATURAL ENVIRONMENT

The unspoilt, diverse natural environment is retained and enhanced as the pre-eminent and most valued asset in the district.

Residents and visitors have opportunities to access, appreciate and interact with the natural environment and its scenic open spaces without compromising it.

Residents recognise the extreme bushfire risk and have successfully adopted strategies to strengthen community resilience and create safer communities.

The open valley landscape of the Painkalac Creek is celebrated and treasured.

COASTAL VILLAGE CHARACTER

The towns retain their informal, low-key coastal village character, with built form recessive in the landscape.

Any change and development is modest and contained within the existing town boundaries and respectful of the local character. It does not change the essential look and feel of the area or impinge on the natural environment.

The large bush blocks on the edges of the towns provide a buffer to the National Park and offer a low density experience at the town entries.

LIVING TOWNS

The towns offer opportunities for both residents and visitors, of all ages, backgrounds and interests to engage in community life, physical activity and healthy living. They are small living communities – close, diverse, friendly and creative with adequate facilities and range of activities – basic yet well serviced.

A range of housing types, sensitively designed and sited, supports a variety of ages and abilities.

Opportunities for community hubs – places where the community can meet and interact – are retained and enhanced.

LOCAL ECONOMY & TOURISM

The towns are places people want to visit and stay for longer to enjoy local experiences afforded by the relaxed coastal village atmosphere and natural environment. The towns have minimised the environmental, amenity and traffic and parking impacts of large visitor numbers at high profile tourist destinations

The low-key shopping centres offer contemporary and versatile retail and leisure opportunities for residents and visitors alike, providing a setting for social gathering and interaction.

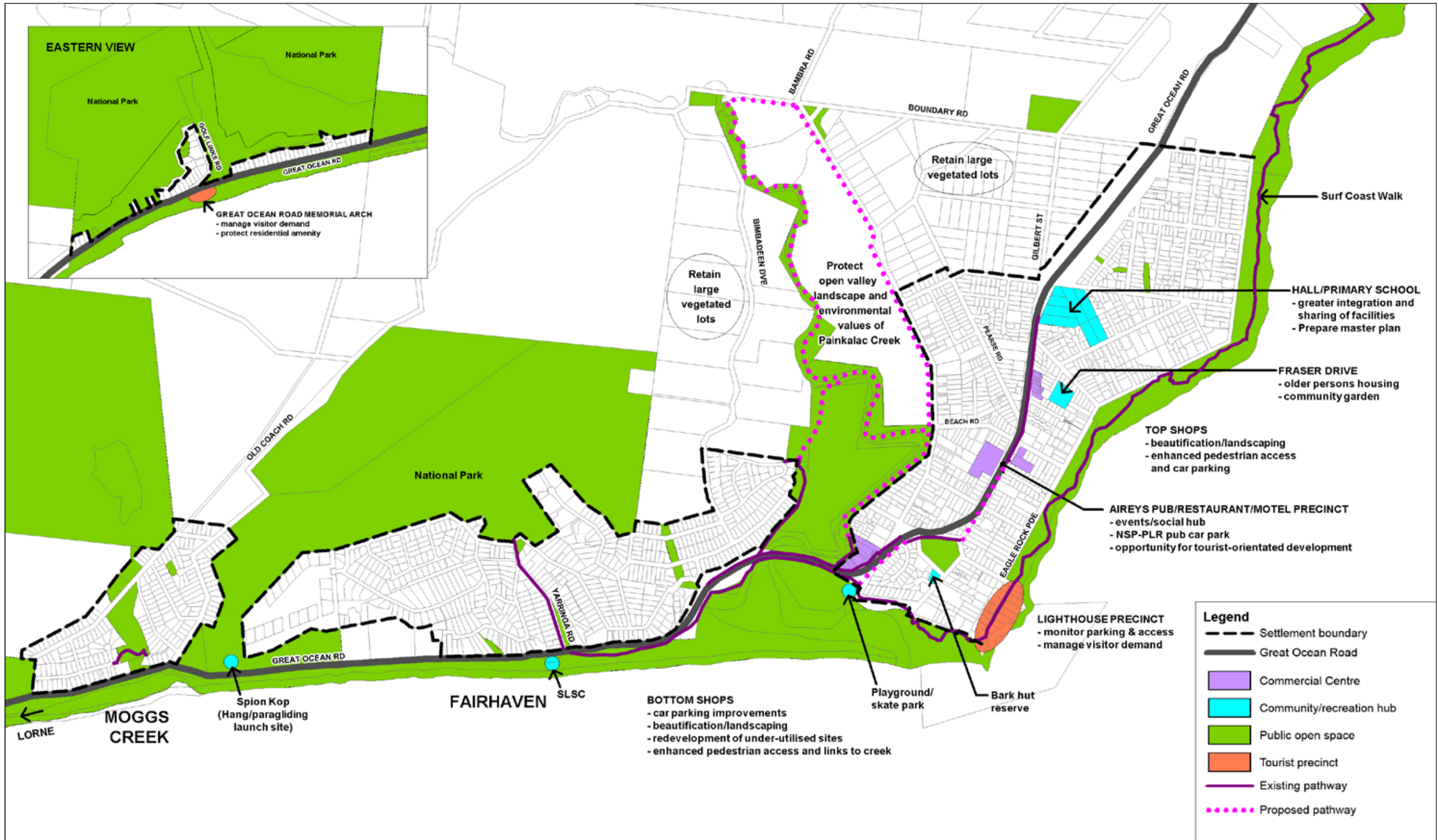
4. The Structure Plan

The following section outlines the Structure Plan for Aireys Inlet to Eastern View. The Structure Plan is built around the four main themes identified in the Vision and Principles. Each theme is underpinned by objectives, strategies and actions. The Structure Plan Map presented on the following page focuses on the four settlements and the immediate surrounds and shows the key strategic directions.

KEY DIRECTIONS

1. Contain the townships within their existing settlement boundaries to protect surrounding environmentally significant land and retain buffers to the Great Otway National Park.
2. Protect and enhance the environmental assets within and surrounding the towns to maintain the area's natural beauty and attractive setting.
3. Protect and enhance the small scale, low-key, informal, non-suburban, vegetated coastal village character of the towns.
4. Facilitate modest infill development within the defined settlement boundaries that is sensitive to the vegetated coastal landscape setting of the towns.
5. Encourage the provision of a diverse range of accommodation and housing options, in particular well designed compact low maintenance dwellings suitable for older residents within walking distance of community and commercial facilities.
6. Contain commercial development within the existing boundaries of the Top and Bottom Shops, providing for viable and attractive centres with a diverse range of commercial activities, adequate car parking, good pedestrian/bicycle access and opportunities for incremental growth.
7. Support a sustainable local tourism industry, while managing the pressure of large visitor numbers to minimise any detrimental environmental and amenity impacts and recognising the impact of peak summer periods and bushfire risk..
8. Maintain a variety of accessible community, recreation and open space facilities which meet community needs.
9. Maintain and build an integrated network of safe, connected and accessible pedestrian and cycle pathways throughout and between the townships, linking the commercial centres, community facilities, recreation and open space areas, and coastal and hinterland walking trails.
10. Apply appropriate mitigation and adaptation strategies to avoid and minimise the impacts of environmental risks (in particular bushfire and climate change).





4.1 NATURAL ENVIRONMENT

Protect and enhance, and where appropriate, provide access to, the natural environment so that it can be enjoyed by all both now and into the future.

Environmental protection

The natural environment of Aireys Inlet to Eastern View is widely recognised as its most significant asset. The beaches, coastal reserves, waterways and wetlands, marine environments, conservation and nature reserves, heathlands and indigenous tree cover and understory all contribute to the district's attractiveness, identity, liveability and sense of place. The townships and hinterland support a rich diversity and significant cover of indigenous vegetation of local, regional and state significance, providing habitat for many species of native animals, including various threatened fauna species such as the Powerful Owl, Grey Goshawk, Rufous Bristlebird, Swamp Antechinus and Hooded Plover. The indigenous tree canopy is dominated by Messmate Stringybark, Manna Gum, Ironbark, Moonah and Drooping Sheoak, with threatened flora species Anglesea Grevillea, Merrans Sun-orchid and Southern Spider-orchid also present in the district. Protecting this environment is critical to preserving the biodiversity and maintaining the natural values enjoyed by many residents and visitors.

The Painkalac Creek Valley, separating Aireys Inlet from Fairhaven, is of high environmental, landscape and cultural significance. The valley and its creek are a dominant feature in the district, with much of the creek and valley visible from private land and public spaces, including the Great Ocean Road and lighthouse. The valley acts as a green wedge between the two towns and is an integral part of the natural and rural

atmosphere of the area. The valley also has high regional geomorphological significance, being one of only a few well developed floodplains and estuaries in the Otway Ranges. The *Painkalac Creek Wetlands and Floodplain Environmental Study* (1990) effectively called for the severe restriction of development and activity in the valley as almost any development or increase in activity would have serious detrimental effect upon the environmental sensitivity and scenic landscape values of the valley. It stated that it is important that the valley is retained in its present rural character and the creek environs remain generally in their present form. This view is consistent with community sentiment today and the Structure Plan seeks to protect the open landscape character and natural values of the Painkalac Creek Valley.

The coastline from Aireys Inlet to Eastern View and low lying areas around the Painkalac Creek estuary are vulnerable to the effects of climate change. According to GORCC's Coastal Climate Change Vulnerability and Adaption study (SKM, 2012), inundation, storm erosion and beach recession will place increasing pressures on the cliffs and dunes. Residential areas, recreational and tourism infrastructure, beaches and surf breaks and sections of the Great Ocean Road are also at risk. Aireys Inlet has a known history of flooding and as the climate changes into the future it is expected that more extreme weather events and changes in the frequency and intensity of rainfall and flooding events will occur. The Painkalac Creek will continue to be subject to flooding under various scenarios, including riverine flooding (caused by catchment rainfall), storm surge (from coastal wave, tide and wind action), river mouth closures and future sea level rise. Consideration of appropriate and proactive floodplain management in partnership with the Corangamite CMA will therefore continue to be a pressing issue.

The dark night skies resulting from a lack of artificial illumination are another highly valued aspect of the natural environment. Many residents would like to preserve this aspect.





Objective 1.1: Preserve and enhance the natural environment, scenic landscapes and cultural values of the towns and surrounding hinterland

Strategies

- Protect and enhance the indigenous vegetation cover and biodiversity through effective vegetation management controls and activities.
- Preserve the ambience of the night sky from artificial illumination.
- Avoid development in areas at risk from the effects of coastal processes, flooding, bushfire, acid sulfate soils, erosion, landslip and salinity.
- Protect views to the surrounding landscape, natural features and cultural landmarks.
- Protect and enhance the open landscape character and natural values of the Painkalac Creek Valley.
- Encourage the planting of locally indigenous vegetation species to compensate for the removal of, or to complement, existing native vegetation without increasing bushfire risk.
- Encourage the removal and discourage the planting of environmental weeds and exotic plant species.
- Acknowledge, respect and protect the area's indigenous and post-contact heritage values.

Actions

- Promote *Weeds of the Surf Coast Shire* (Surf Coast Shire, 2013) to encourage property owners to recognise, remove and manage environmental weeds.
- Continue to work with and support other land managers and volunteer conservation groups on environmental enhancement works, including revegetation, removal of environmental weeds, pest animal control and protection of native flora and fauna.
- Provide information about the area's indigenous and post-contact heritage values through appropriate (understated) interpretive signage and heritage trails.
- Apply the Environmental Significance Overlay to protect and enhance the indigenous vegetation cover and biodiversity.
- Support further studies to determine the nature of risks associated with flooding, coastal acid sulfate soils and the effects of climate change within the area and develop appropriate responses to manage these risks, including consideration of planning scheme policies and overlays to control development in areas vulnerable to environmental hazards.

Bushfire management

With the natural beauty of the vegetated environment comes an extreme bushfire risk. The Aireys Inlet district is one of the highest risk localities in Victoria. Although most residents may be well aware of and prepared to live with the risk, during the summer periods when the bushfire risk is at its highest there is a large number of visitors in the region who have little or no awareness of the risk.

A Neighbourhood Safer Place – Place of last Resort (NSP-PLR) has been designated at the Bottom Shops carpark, however it is unlikely to have sufficient capacity for shelter in the event of a significant bushfire. Several other locations, such as the Community Hall, Fairhaven SLSC, Painkalac Creek mouth and Skate Park, have been investigated as to their suitability as NSP-PLR, however have found to not meet Council and CFA criteria

due to a range of factors. The car park in front of the Aireys Pub was approved by Council in April 2015 as a second NSP-PLR in Aireys Inlet. It is recommended that continued investigations take place to identify suitable options for safer places given the district's extreme fire risk. Although preliminary investigations have identified that there would be significant costs and environmental impacts involved with upgrading the Community Hall and its immediate surrounds to meet the State government criteria that would enable the hall to be designated as a NSP-PLR or bushfire refuge/shelter, further investigations are required to determine the exact costs and implications. The proposed Fairhaven underpass has also been mooted as a possible NSP-PLR, subject to further investigation.

Efforts by the various agencies involved in fire prevention activities – Parks Victoria, DELWP, CFA, Surf Coast Shire – are ongoing to minimise the risk to life, property and community infrastructure from the devastating effects of bushfire, and to strengthen community resilience. Activities include planned burns; fuel reduction through slashing, pruning and mulching (mostly of woody weeds); maintenance of strategic fuel breaks and fire access roads; education, community engagement and communication (e.g. Resilient Communities Program, Community Fire Ready workshops, Community Fireguard meetings, property assessments); and application of effective land use planning and development controls such as the Bushfire Management Overlay (BMO).

Objective 1.2: Effectively manage the risk of bushfire to minimise the loss of life, property, infrastructure and environmental assets

Strategies

- Ensure that the need for bushfire protection measures does not compromise the biodiversity and environmental objectives and preservation of the towns' character.
- Avoid development in locations where the bushfire risk is assessed as extreme.
- Ensure development is directed into locations of lower bushfire risk and is sited, designed and constructed to mitigate the risks from bushfire.
- Strengthen community resilience to bushfire.

Actions

- Promote the Landscaping your Surf Coast Garden for Bushfire (Surf Coast Shire, 2015) booklet to reduce bushfire risk on private properties.
- Lobby relevant authorities to improve telecommunication services blackspots (e.g. mobile phone, broadband, Wi-Fi) to facilitate the dissemination of critical fire information during extreme fire risk days and bushfire emergencies.
- Pending resolution of permanent solutions, investigate the provision of a temporary telecommunications facility during bushfire seasons.
- Work with emergency management agencies on emergency management plans/procedures for the Great Ocean Road.
- Investigate options for the provision of additional NSP-PLR's and/or shelters/refuges.
- Continue the Great Ocean Road vegetation management program.
- Continue to maintain close working relationships with DELWP, Parks Victoria and the CFA to deliver effective bushfire management strategies (including management of public land surrounding the townships) and community education programs.
- Engage in conversations with bus and tour operators to limit access on extreme fire risk days.
- In consultation with DELWP and CFA update the BMO mapping to accurately reflect the hazard and provide for appropriate mitigation measures for communities at risk.

1. NSP-PLRs are not community fire refuges or emergency relief centres. They are places of last resort during the passage of a bushfire and are intended to be used by people whose primary bushfire plans have failed. NSP-PLRs are places of relative safety only and do not guarantee the survival of those who assemble there.



Hinterland

The hinterland provides an attractive environment for accommodation, ecotourism and other forms of tourism enterprises. The larger parcels of private land surrounding the towns however serve as a buffer between the residential areas and the National Park and have significant conservation value, extremely high bushfire risk and limited access to infrastructure. The relaxation of the provisions of the Rural Conservation Zone by the State government in 2013 creates pressure for more intensive (tourist) developments in

the hinterland. Permitted uses under the zone include restaurant, bed and breakfast, residential hotel, group accommodation, rural industry, landscape gardening supplies, primary and secondary school and winery. The Structure Plan aims to preserve the integrity of the hinterland by strongly discouraging uses and developments that are likely to have an adverse impact on the environmental values of the hinterland areas and abutting National Park.

Objective 1.3: Maintain appropriate environmental buffers between the townships and to the Great Otway National Park

Strategies

- Restrict development of private land outside the settlement boundaries to protect environmental values, retain the vegetated landscape setting and maintain buffers to the National Park.

Actions

- Continue to apply the Rural Conservation Zone to private land outside the settlement boundaries.

4.2 COASTAL VILLAGE CHARACTER

Protect and enhance the individual small scale, low-key, informal, non-suburban, vegetated coastal village character of the towns.

Maintaining the low key coastal village character of the townships is essential to the community – avoiding inappropriate development and urban looking infrastructure, not becoming another Lorne or Anglesea, and keeping the individual identity of the towns.

A key element of the built environment is it being visually recessive, with the indigenous vegetation cover dominating the built form. An ongoing threat to this character emanates from the re-subdivision of larger lots into smaller lots, infill development and replacement of older style holiday homes by more substantial homes with little space for the retention or planting of trees and vegetation to soften their appearance and to maintain the established landscape character. Demand for views can result in increased building heights, siting of buildings in visually prominent locations or removal of vegetation to enhance view corridors. Requirements to maintain defensible space for bushfire protection can erode the vegetated cover, whilst the construction of urban style infrastructure also compromises the informal character of the area.

In order to protect and enhance the existing and preferred character, development should:

- Display a coastal style of architecture;
- Maintain a low rise building height that is contained below the tree canopy and does not protrude above ridgelines;
- Have a limited scale, building footprint and hard surfaces;
- Be well setback from property boundaries;
- Maintain a sense of openness through informal fencing of property boundaries;
- Apply informal looking infrastructure (e.g. gravel driveways) and a minimal amount of hard landscaping;
- Utilise lightweight, non-suburban, natural materials and natural, subdued, earthy colours to blend into the landscape;
- Allow for the retention and planting of indigenous vegetation, where consistent with bushfire protection measures; and
- Allow for a reasonable sharing of views of significant landscape features.

Residential development and housing

The townships have limited growth opportunities due to the environmental and physical limitations and the desire to protect the low density vegetated character. Future population and housing growth will depend on variables such as:

- The number of holiday houses that are converted to permanent residences (i.e. the occupancy rate);
- The number of persons per occupied dwelling (i.e. the average household size); and
- The level of infill development (development on vacant lots and subdivision).

Residential development is to be confined to the defined urban boundaries as depicted on the Structure Plan Map. The large vegetated allotments outside the town boundaries are to be retained as buffers to the surrounding National Park.

A review of planning controls was undertaken as part of the preparation of the Structure Plan to assess their effectiveness in achieving the neighbourhood character objectives. The review found that the controls are generally being well implemented and are achieving the objectives of the planning scheme. Variations to development standards have in most cases been justified having considered site specific conditions and the overarching objectives of the relevant overlays and strategies (rather than a “tick-the-box” approach). The extent to which vegetation has been retained or planted to screen buildings has been found to be an elemental factor in determining a development’s ability in achieving the neighbourhood character objectives. The review showed that although some larger contemporary dwellings have been constructed that, when viewed in isolation, may not necessarily be of a scale or design that would be deemed consistent with neighbourhood character, these can still fit in where they are located on a larger lot, are well setback from property boundaries and screened by indigenous vegetation.²

2. Aireys Inlet to Eastern View Planning for the Future: Review of Neighbourhood Character Controls, April 2015



Examples of contemporary housing framed by vegetation

The analysis of dwelling typologies highlights that the towns have a limited range of housing options, with a strong presence of separate, family sized dwellings (96% versus state average of 77%). In light of the current demographic profile and projected change, the Structure Plan recognises the need to provide a greater diversity of housing types and sizes, in particular smaller, low maintenance dwellings for older persons to enable them to downsize and age in place.

The Council owned site at Fraser Drive in Aireys Inlet has long been identified as a suitable location to provide compact low maintenance dwellings suitable for older persons. This site has a long history of initiatives, yet its potential is still to be realised. In 1986 Barrabool Shire Council purchased the land and designated it for the purposes of providing housing units for the aged. In 1991 and 1993 Council received grants to build four social housing units for Office of Housing tenants. The site currently includes the four social housing units, the

Community Garden 3231 and the balance of the site is still vacant. The site connects with Albert Avenue via an informal walkway (refer Figure 3). In 2003, Council resolved to confirm AIDA as its agent for a housing development on the site. Despite many efforts and discussions over the years, including clarifying and resolving the matter of the Director of Housing's interest in the land, development on the site has not progressed. Community engagement for the Structure Plan reaffirmed broad community support for redevelopment of the site for housing to meet the needs of an increasing number of older residents who live in family homes which are becoming too big to manage or are too far from shops and services for people with reducing mobility, and who wish to down-size to remain living in Aireys Inlet. It is recommended that investigations into housing options be restarted. This should also look at how the community garden can be accommodated on the site and involve consultation with the current unit tenants, the community garden, AIDA and the surrounding community.

Figure 3: 2 Fraser Drive, Aireys Inlet showing existing community garden and social housing units



Source: Surf Coast Shire Council



Objective 2.1: Facilitate housing development that respects the coastal village character and vegetated bush setting of the townships and responds to community needs

Strategies

- Contain urban development within the defined settlement boundaries as depicted on the Structure Plan Map.
- Encourage infill development within the settlement boundaries that is sensitive to the vegetated coastal landscape setting.
- Provide a diverse range of accommodation and housing options, in particular well designed compact low maintenance dwellings suitable for older residents within walking distance of community and commercial facilities.
- Encourage environmentally sustainable design principles in the design and siting of new dwellings and the retrofitting of existing buildings.

Actions

- Continue to apply planning controls that prescribe residential densities and influence the size, siting and design of development.
- Progress investigations into the options for higher density housing for older persons on the Council owned site at 2 Fraser Drive, Aireys Inlet.
- Use the Surf Coast Sustainable Design Book (2010) to promote design excellence and environmentally sustainable design practices.

Infrastructure

A key aspect of the highly valued relatively undeveloped, natural character of the townships is the informal appearance of infrastructure – the unsealed roads, the lack of concrete kerbing and channel drainage, the limited paved pathways and lack of roadside footpaths in residential streets, the gravel car parks at reserves and beaches, the basic visitor facilities and the limited street lighting that enables the night sky to be preserved. This view is consistent with the findings of the *Aireys Inlet to Eastern View Neighbourhood Character Study* (2004).

The construction and sealing of gravel roads in Aireys Inlet to Eastern View has been a contentious issue for many years. There are calls from some residents for roads to be sealed to increase safety and to reduce dust and maintenance requirements. Many property owners however value the informality of the unsealed surface and the casual shared pedestrian use of roadways over the benefits of reduced dust and improved access gained by sealing the pavement.

Where infrastructure improvements, such as road sealing and drainage works, are to be considered contributory funding from benefiting property owners would typically

be sought through a Special Charge Scheme. The Local Government Act and Council's Special Charge Scheme Policy provide guidance in relation to sharing of infrastructure improvement costs between Council and benefiting owners. As Council's Special Charge Scheme Policy indicates, the final outcome will depend to a large degree on the priority placed upon the work, the level of community support and available funding.

Previous road and drainage schemes initiated by Council for various precincts in Aireys Inlet and Fairhaven encountered strong community opposition, mainly due to the scale and nature of the works and costs involved and the effect on the natural and informal character of the towns. Precinct wide road and drainage improvements for two precincts in Aireys Inlet were the subject of Citizens Juries in 2007 and 2008 – an intensive public engagement process empowering the local community to consider if and what road and drainage improvements were necessary. The Juries concluded that some road and drainage improvements were necessary but that the streets should remain largely unsealed.

Pearse Road was sealed in 2014 following a petition from residents. The project was completed with funding from both Council and benefiting owners. The sealing of Pearse Road was seen by many residents as a good example where the need for improvement has been balanced with retaining the informal character of the neighbourhood as much as possible, by maintaining informal edges and meandering around trees. Any future requests for sealing of roads would need to be initiated by landowners and demonstrate majority landowner support (for example petitions for the sealing of a section of Aireys Street and Hopkins Street were received in 2015, resulting in Council commencing a process of further investigation and consultation).

In order to maintain the current character of the towns, gravel road surfaces should be retained where practicable. It is imperative to ensure that where roads are to be sealed or where footpaths are provided this

occurs in a manner that retains the informal appearance of the area as closely as possible, with an emphasis on retaining vegetation within the road verges and alternatives to the use of standard bitumen and concrete paths and kerbing (e.g. coloured or exposed aggregate bitumen, soft road edges, swale drains, gravel paths).

Undergrounding of powerlines in visually prominent locations would also contribute to enhancing the scenic landscape qualities of the area, as well as reduce fire risk from electrical sparks. This is a costly exercise and would require significant investment. It is recommended that a feasibility study be commissioned to scope the works and develop a cost model.

Coordination between the various land management agencies should be improved to ensure a consistent approach to infrastructure delivery, standards and maintenance.

Objective 2.2: Ensure that the provision, upgrade and renewal of infrastructure is compatible with the informal coastal character and environmental values of the towns and responsive to community needs and wishes

Strategies

- Preserve the informal appearance of roads and paths by retaining gravel surfaces wherever practicable.
- Ensure that where roads are to be sealed, this occurs in a manner that retains their informal appearance as closely as possible, e.g. by using alternative pavement treatments (e.g. coloured or exposed aggregate bitumen in lieu of standard bitumen), maintaining soft road edges and open swales in lieu of concrete kerb are channel, minimising carriageway widths and retaining roadside vegetation.
- Ensure footpaths are constructed in materials that are appropriate for the setting, purpose, character of the town and the local community.
- Achieve an appropriate balance between providing car parking spaces and protecting the character and environmental values.
- Encourage the undergrounding of powerlines in high profile locations.

Actions

- Investigate the feasibility of relocating powerlines underground along sections of the Great Ocean Road.
- Engage the community prior to the commencement of any design work to ensure the community has the opportunity to contribute to the design of proposed infrastructure solutions.

Signage

Many people would like to see a reduction of the visual clutter of signs throughout the district. Signs provide key orientation (e.g. way-finding and place naming), interpretive (e.g. information that helps people increase their awareness or understanding of natural features or the cultural history of a place) and regulatory information (e.g. access restrictions, traffic controls, dog regulations) for residents and visitors. They increase visitors' enjoyment and satisfaction by helping them to experience, understand and appreciate the area's special natural and cultural values, or to enhance their

safety, but they can also detract from the natural beauty and informal character of the area.

Improvement of dog regulation signage was suggested by some people to enhance awareness and greater understanding of the applicable dog regulations at beaches and nature reserves. The regulatory signs are often combined with other signs and hard to read or comprehend. It is recommended that the signs be reviewed and suggestions for improvement investigated.

Objective 2.3: Ensure signage respects the character of the area and minimises visual pollution

Strategies

- Limit the proliferation of signs to avoid visual clutter.
- Ensure signs are effective in their messaging and respectful of the character of the area.
- Facilitate the display of interpretive signs that provide information about the area's cultural history and natural environment in appropriate locations.
- Facilitate the provision of appropriately designed and sited way-finding signs.

Actions

- Undertake a sign audit and remove old and redundant signs, replace with new or consolidated signs where possible, and provide a consistent style.
- Undertake a review of dog regulation signage at beaches and reserves.



4.3 LIVING TOWNS

Support the towns as living communities with opportunities for both residents and visitors of all ages to participate in activities that promote health and wellbeing and a sense of community.

Community facilities

The community highly values the relatively undeveloped nature of the towns and the limited urban amenities. To ensure the needs of both the permanent and visitor population are met, a limited range of community services and facilities should continue to be provided while maintaining the low key nature of the towns. As facilities unavailable in Aireys Inlet are typically accessed in Anglesea, Lorne, Torquay or Geelong, it is considered important to improve public transport to increase connections to these centres for those less mobile and to reduce car dependency.

An ageing population creates specific service demands, particularly around health care services, social and community facilities and transport, and mobility and accessibility needs. While the vast majority of retirees will have many active years, older age can increase the likelihood of health or mobility constraints. While the towns may be attractive for active retirees, reduced mobility and higher service needs associated with frail old age may necessitate a move to a larger centre. For some, this may involve financial challenges or the breaking of social bonds and networks.³

The Community Garden 3231 on Council owned land at 2 Fraser Drive, Aireys Inlet is a valuable community asset and social hub. Established in May 2010 the Community Garden has been a growing success story, building from strength to strength. The garden has become a thriving community hub with over 65 members, representing a wide demographic of Aireys Inlet, Fairhaven, Moggs Creek and Eastern View residents, both permanent and part-time. It is a shared space for people of all walks of life and ages to come together to share learning skills and promote physical activity, mental wellbeing, access to fresh local produce, healthy eating and social networks. The garden also interacts with many other community groups such as AIDA, Anglesea Community Garden and the Anglesea & District Men's Shed, and regularly hosts children from Aireys Inlet Primary School to teach them about growing and eating fresh food. The Community Garden has a temporary agreement with Council to use the land as the site has been identified for future housing development,

as discussed at Section 4.2. Council has been liaising with the garden committee to find an alternate site, including at Lialeeta Road in Fairhaven, but discussions and investigations have not yielded an outcome. The community engagement for the structure plan has indicated strong preference from the garden members and other residents for the garden to stay at its current location. The garden could exist alongside any future housing as a shared open space and would be a great and complementary asset to such housing especially if that is to be at higher densities and for older persons, it is felt. The amenity and social benefits afforded by the garden would allow a more intensive development of the remainder of the site. It is ideally located in a central area, within walking distance from the shops and community hall. The proposed alternate site in Fairhaven put forward by Council is deemed inferior and not central, meaning members would have to drive to it. Investigations into opportunities for future housing development should consider how the garden could be integrated on the site.



3. DTPLI, 2013



Photos courtesy of Community Garden 3231

Some people have raised the idea of expanding facilities at the community hall and primary school, e.g. an indoor recreation facility for multi-purpose activities, outdoor fitness stations, public toilets (as an alternative to providing toilets at the Top Shops), and fire shelter or refuge. A master plan for the Anderson Roadknight

Reserve and Community Hall will be prepared to guide future use and development of the precinct. The site is an important community activity hub and any future plan should also consider enhanced integration between the reserve/hall and primary school to encourage the sharing of facilities.

Objective 3.1: Provide an appropriate range of community services and facilities that meet the needs of the current and future population

Strategies

- Apply the principles of ‘universal design’ and ‘access for all’ to promote a healthy, active and connected community for all ages and abilities.
- Promote the Community Hall/Recreation Reserve as a community activity hub and encourage integration with the Primary School and the sharing of facilities.
- Support and promote opportunities that foster the community spirit in the towns.
- Recognise the community building capabilities and physical and mental health benefits of existing community hubs, such as the Community Garden, Community Hall, Primary School and SLSC.

Actions

- Prepare a master plan for Anderson Roadknight Reserve / Community Hall to guide future use and development.
- Investigate opportunities to integrate the community garden with future housing development at 2 Fraser Drive, Aireys Inlet.

Recreation and open space

The townships are well provided with public open space, affording opportunities for physical activity, passive recreation, relaxation and appreciation of the natural environment. The Issues and Opportunities Paper for Surf Coast Shire’s Open Space Strategy Review identifies that the Aireys Inlet Precinct provides 5% of the Shire’s total population, but has 12% of the total land area that is classified as Council owned and managed open space⁴. Much of the open space is based around coastal reserves, beaches, waterways, and conservation and nature reserves.

Aireys Inlet is the only township in the Shire without a designated active recreation reserve (i.e. sports playing field), mainly due to the lack of a suitable location acceptable to the community and the low levels of local demand for competitive sports. The local community

relies largely on the sporting facilities provided in Torquay, Bellbrae, Anglesea and Lorne for their competitive sporting needs. The current oval at the Primary School is undersized and has limited opportunities for enlargement due to physical constraints, such as available site area, topography and vegetation. It is suitable for training only, not competition.

Investigations into the feasibility of an active recreation reserve to meet local football and cricket training and competition needs have been ongoing since 1983 and have proven to be arduous. Several specific proposals for an oval and a range of recreational facilities, including within the Painkalac Creek Valley, were considered in the 1980’s, but each proposal was abandoned following community opposition.

4. ROSS Planning, Issues and opportunities for public open space in the Surf Coast Shire, Open Space Strategy 2015-2025 Discussion Paper, February 2015



Inlet Reserve adjacent skate park

As part of the 1993 Structure Plan process six sites in the Aireys Inlet-Fairhaven district were assessed for their suitability to provide an active recreation reserve. The assessment concluded that a perfect oval site simply did not exist and if the community was to be provided with adequate and accessible sporting facilities then compromises must be made. The Structure Plan reserved a decision on a site due to the lack of a clear indication of community attitudes towards the preferred site, but did rule out the Painkalac Valley given its significant environmental and visual qualities.

Investigations into a suitable site were again undertaken as part of the *Aireys Inlet Recreation Infrastructure Strategy*. Stage 1 of the strategy (2007) assessed the suitability of a parcel of Crown land on the corner of Gilbert Street and Boundary Road, for which Council became the land manager in 2006, and concluded that this site was not suitable for an active recreation reserve due to the significant native vegetation cover and fauna habitat (including old growth trees), unfavourable topography (requiring significant earthworks) and limited size. It was considered that the site's potential lies more with informal use and passive recreation such as walking trails and nature appreciation. The study also considered possible sites adjacent the skate park and the existing oval at the primary school, however these sites were discounted on the basis of various unsuitable characteristics including being too small, unsuitable topography and presence of native vegetation. Stage 2 of the strategy (2008) subsequently looked into alternative locations for an active recreation reserve and identified four sites in the Painkalac Valley as potentially suitable. A number of unsuccessful efforts have been made to secure a suitable site within the valley following this study.



Primary school oval

Council further investigated the need and options for an active recreation reserve in Aireys Inlet following the receipt in 2013 of a petition from the Aireys Inlet Eels Football Club to provide a recreation reserve for training and home games. The analysis showed that the demand for facilities for organised sport in Aireys Inlet is limited based on current and future demographic trends and sport participation rates. Aireys Inlet could only sustain a junior cricket team in the long term. In addition, it was recognised that the Aireys Inlet community acts as a feeder for football and cricket teams in Anglesea and Lorne. The creation of a team and formal recreation reserve in Aireys Inlet could lead to football, cricket, netball and other sporting teams operating out of the adjacent townships becoming unviable.

The community engagement for *Aireys Inlet to Eastern View Planning for the Future* sought to define the level of community need and interest in an active recreation space in the Painkalac Valley⁵. There were strong views in the community opposing a reserve in this location based on the environmental and visual impacts of an active recreation space, the perceived lack of viable local demand levels to sustain any sports teams and the fear that a reserve would bring with it the necessary structures, fencing, car parking, lights etc. and become a precedent for other development in the valley. Equally, there were many strong views supporting a reserve citing community, social and health benefits, opportunities for younger generations to be physically active and not having to drive to other towns for training and competition. It was also felt that an active open space reserve could be used as a community gathering space for a number of activities other than sport, such as passive and social recreation including walking, markets, events and unstructured play. Having a local facility could increase the percentage of children and adults who participate in sport and active recreation. Possible use of the site as a much needed Neighbourhood Safer Place was also seen as a welcome opportunity.

5. Of the 149 survey respondents, 51% were opposed to a recreation reserve or thought one was not important, while 48% were in favour or thought a reserve was somewhat important.



Significant further design work and investigations would be required to determine whether a workable solution is possible, including flood and water quality modelling, a detailed flora and fauna survey, soil and geotechnical analysis and cultural heritage assessment of the area, and the land would need to be compulsorily purchased. Total project cost would run in the several millions.

On balance, having considered the constraints and opportunities and community views both for and against a recreation space within the Painkalac Valley, it is recommended that Council no longer pursue the provision of an active recreation space, for the following reasons:

- The demand for active sports is low and future demographic and sport participation trends suggest demand is likely to drop even further.
- Sports grounds and teams in the neighbouring towns of Lorne and Anglesea rely on participation from Aireys Inlet to Eastern View residents and their viability will come under pressure should Aireys Inlet have its own designated facility.

- The Painkalac Valley is environmentally sensitive and within a designated floodplain with significant flora and fauna, Aboriginal cultural heritage sensitivity, coastal acid sulfate soils and poor drainage.
- Any structures and supporting infrastructure that would be required to enhance the useability of the reserve would erode the highly valued open landscape character of the valley.
- The costs and risks of providing an active recreation space are not proportionate to the perceived benefits and anticipated use.
- Providing a dedicated facility in Aireys Inlet is not consistent with the Council supported G21 and AFL Barwon Regional Strategy (2015), which focuses on increasing the quality and functionality and maximising the carrying capacity of existing facilities and the planning and development of new facilities in key growth areas.
- Based on feedback from the community through engagement for the Structure Plan, there is no clear mandate to proceed with pursuing an active recreation space.

Objective 3.2: Ensure existing open space areas and recreation, play and sporting facilities are well maintained and accessible to cater for the passive and active recreation needs of all ages

Strategies

- Ensure the natural and open feel of open space and recreation areas is maintained by minimising intrusion by new structures, infrastructure and signage.
- Improve the accessibility and sharing of sporting grounds in Lorne, Anglesea, Bellbrae and Torquay to meet the active sporting needs of Aireys Inlet to Eastern View residents.
- Encourage the sharing of facilities at the Community Hall and Primary School.
- Facilitate the provision of active recreation activities in passive open space areas where these do not impinge on natural values or residential amenity.

Actions

- Plan for the provision of new playgrounds or refurbishment of existing playgrounds in accordance with the Surf Coast Playground Strategy (2011).
- Work in partnership with local sport clubs and community groups to identify future needs.
- Assist the Primary School in investigating opportunities to enhance the suitability of the school oval for increased recreational use by the community.
- Work with other land management agencies to facilitate a coordinated approach to open space and infrastructure planning, provision, maintenance and management.

Walking

A valued aspect of the village character and liveability of the towns is the network of walking trails and pathways, including the cliff top walk, pathways along the Painkalac Creek, Inlet and Great Ocean Road between Aireys Inlet and Fairhaven, and the numerous trails in the National Park that enable access to and appreciation of the natural environment, scenic landscapes and other places of interest. Walking, and to a lesser degree cycling, is the most popular recreational activity in the towns⁶. The community prides itself strongly on the opportunities for and love of walking and would like to see the towns branded as a “walking destination”, offering a variety of walking experiences. Walking and cycling provides an effective way to support community health and wellbeing, interaction and cohesiveness⁷, for both residents and visitors. The Structure Plan aims to build on this and contribute to further improving the network by providing continuous and well maintained pathways, and extending the network to link with other destinations. It will be important that the various land management agencies - Surf Coast Shire, GORCC, Parks Victoria and VicRoads - ensure that pathway networks within their areas of management are linked together and consistent infrastructure standards are applied.

The Great Ocean Road provides a challenge for pedestrians wishing to cross the road, particularly during the busy holiday periods. There are only a few designated pedestrian refuges, which are not necessarily within desire lines. Provision of additional pedestrian crossings within desire lines in appropriate locations, particularly around the commercial centres and community facilities, is necessary to encourage and support safe pedestrian movement. This matter has been raised as one of the top issues for the local community through community consultation for the Structure Plan. In response Council has brought forward a proposal to construct a pedestrian refuge within the Great Ocean Road between the Bottom Shops and Inlet Reserve (to be constructed in 2015/16). Access to Fairhaven Beach and the Surf Lifesaving Club will be improved with the construction of an underpass underneath the Great Ocean Road.

Suggestions put forward by the community for new or upgraded pathways include:

- Continuous paths along the Great Ocean Road between the Top and Bottom Shops.
- A pathway from the Bottom Shops via the pedestrian laneway and River Reserve Road to Bambra Road and continuing along Bambra Road to the Distillery Creek picnic grounds in the National Park.
- A trail along the banks of the Painkalac Creek from the Great Ocean Road to Old Coach Road.
- A pathway from Aireys Street along Sandy Gully to Sandy Gully Beach.
- Extension of the Surf Coast Walk from Fairhaven to Lorne.
- Connections with and through the Great Otway National Park.

The exact location, alignment and construction details of any pathways to be provided will be determined through further investigation and consultation with the community.

Enhanced connections between the Surf Coast Walk and the commercial centres, for example through Albert Avenue and Kerrie Court, are also desirable to encourage walkers to access the commercial services in Aireys Inlet. This will require appropriate signage to alert walkers to available facilities.

The pathway network is progressively being improved through implementation of Council's Pathways Strategy (2012). The Strategy provides an overview and 10 year works program of proposed footpaths, bicycle routes and shared paths throughout the towns to encourage more walking and cycling, improve safe crossing of the Great Ocean Road and provide better access to facilities and open space. It is normal procedure for requests for pathways, either submitted directly by the public or identified in structure plans and master plans, to be forwarded to Council's Pathways Strategy Group for further consideration.

6 The 2007 Recreation Infrastructure Strategy identified walking as the most popular activity with a participation rate of 81% across all age groups.

7 The health benefits and importance of walking have been well established; see for example Healthy by Design: a planner's guide to environments for active living, National Heart Foundation, 2004.

Objective 3.3: Encourage walking as a healthy, sustainable and active form of transport and recreation

Strategies

- Maintain and build an integrated network of safe, connected and accessible pedestrian and cycle pathways throughout and between the townships, linking the commercial centres, community facilities, recreation and open space areas, and coastal and hinterland walking trails.
- Provide ease of way-finding without intrusive signage.
- Promote Aireys Inlet to Eastern View as a walking destination.

Actions

- Refer suggestions for new or improved pathways to Council's Pathways Strategy Group for consideration and investigation.
- Construct a pedestrian refuge on the Great Ocean Road between the Bottom Shops and Inlet Reserve.
- Work with Parks Victoria to improve connections with and through the Great Otway National Park.
- Commence planning to extend the Surf Coast Walk from Fairhaven to Lorne.

Traffic and parking management

The Great Ocean Road is the only main road to and through the towns, providing access for local traffic as well as guiding traffic through the towns to other destinations along the coast. The substantial traffic volumes during peak holiday periods and busy weekends result in traffic delays and queuing on peak days and the usual congestion between Aireys Inlet and the Anglesea roundabout⁸. The large traffic volumes also place short term pressure on the available car parking at the shopping centres, beaches and recreation reserves. The traffic situation will continue to grow as an issue with increasing popularity of the coastal areas as a tourism and day tripper destination as Geelong, Melbourne and the state's population continue to grow and as access to the coast gets better through improvements to the Princes Highway, Geelong Ring Road and Great Ocean Road. Compounding the issue of traffic management is that the busiest periods often coincide with high fire risk days. Emergency evacuation is a major concern with the limited capacity of the Great Ocean Road and lack of an alternative exit route.

There are calls from the community for a permanent reduction of speed limits on the Great Ocean Road through the district. However, as traffic issues are predominantly seasonal, with traffic conditions only problematic in peak holiday periods and fine for the majority of the year, it is recommended that only seasonal limits be applied in the first instance. It is recommended that the speed limit from Boundary Road in Aireys Inlet to the Surf Lifesaving Club in Fairhaven is

reduced to 50km/h, while the speed limit from Fairhaven to Eastern View would benefit from a reduction from 80km/h to 60km/h to improve traffic safety for residents and tourists.

Access and parking at the shopping centres have been raised as ongoing problems by traders and residents. Council has previously investigated options and implemented measures to improve access and parking conditions. The most recent car parking study was undertaken in 2013 and Parking Management Plans for the Top and Bottom Shops were prepared and partially implemented in 2014⁹. The 2013 Parking Study indicated that there is ample supply to accommodate demand for most of the year and that capacity issues predominantly arise during peak holiday periods. Most residents accept the temporary inconvenience of a lack of parking and appreciate that parking supply is fine throughout the rest of the year. Increasing the parking supply to meet peak demand would not be justified for the short periods it is needed and would erode the informal character of the towns. Rather, more efficient use should be made of existing car parks and temporary overflow areas designated to accommodate peak parking demand. Further discussion around car parking at the commercial centres is provided at Section 4.4 of the Structure Plan.

Parking and access around Split Point Lighthouse and Inlet Crescent has been the subject of numerous plans and studies. In February 2009 Council endorsed the *Split Point Lighthouse Precinct Master Plan*, and in

⁸ VicRoads traffic counts recorded a peak of 15,876 vehicles on the Great Ocean Road between Anglesea and Aireys Inlet on 2 January 2015. The daily average in 2014 was 5,500 vehicles.

⁹ Traffix Group, Aireys Inlet and Baines Crescent, Torquay - Parking Study (2013) and Aireys Inlet Commercial Areas - Car Parking Management Plans (2014)

2010 a traffic management plan and a list of actions was endorsed, which have since been implemented incrementally, including redevelopment of the skate park car park, streetscape works in Federal Street to prevent vehicles parking on the side of the road, provision of parking in Inlet Crescent South and provision of signage prohibiting vehicles over six metres in length from entering the Inlet Crescent / Lighthouse Precinct. A proposal in 2012 by GORCC for redevelopment and sealing of the Step Beach car park was not supported by Council. Sensitive modification of the car park may be warranted in the future to increase capacity and traffic flows. Any upgrade should maintain an unsealed surface, avoid removal of significant vegetation, continue to prohibit long vehicle parking and not include an exit point to Eagle Rock Parade.

Investigations into parking for long vehicles (e.g. coaches, mini buses, RV's and vehicles with trailers, boats and caravans) were undertaken through the *Surf Coast Shire Long Vehicle Strategy* (AECOM, 2014). Dedicated long vehicle parking bays are provided on the Great Ocean Road next to the V-Line bus stops near the Bottom Shops in Aireys Inlet. There is capacity to extend these parking spaces if the need arises. Dedicated long vehicle parking is not provided in Fairhaven. Parking takes place on the verge of the Great Ocean Road and in the off-street parking area on Yarringa Road. Long vehicle parking in Eastern View also occurs on the verge of the Great Ocean Road and in the Memorial Arch car park. The Structure Plan does not envision any changes to the current provision of long vehicle parking.

Objective 3.4: Ensure the efficient management of parking demand and traffic flows in a manner that respects the natural values and coastal character of the towns

Strategies

- Recognise the seasonal nature of parking demand and traffic congestion and ensure a reasonable balance is achieved between catering for peak demands and meeting the year round needs of the local community.
- Ensure the efficient provision and management of car parking within and adjacent to the shopping centres and at tourist attractions and recreation destinations.
- Employ strategies to reduce car use and traffic congestion, particularly at peak holiday periods.

Actions

- Monitor access and parking conditions, including parking for long vehicles, in the commercial centres, Lighthouse Precinct and beach car parks to determine if further changes may be warranted in the future.
- Request VicRoads to consider introducing a seasonal 50 km/h speed limit on the Great Ocean Road from Boundary Road, Aireys Inlet to the SLCS in Fairhaven and a 60 km/h speed limit from Fairhaven to Eastern View.

Public transport

Sustainability should be at the heart of transport strategies – walking, cycling or public transport should be people's first choice for short trips to reduce car use and travel congestion. Limited public transport services make it difficult for residents to access services, education and employment in other towns unless they have a car. If greater use of public transport is to be

encouraged, there will be a need for improved public bus transport along the Great Ocean Road with increased frequencies, better timetabling and enhanced access for all abilities. Alternative forms of transport should also be explored, such as community transport or a shuttle bus.

Objective 3.5: Promote the use of public and community transport

Strategies

- Facilitate improved and more frequent public transport services to facilitate access to other towns.

Actions

- Lobby PTV to increase the frequency and accessibility of bus services along the Great Ocean Road.
- Improve all abilities access to the bus stops at the Top Shops.
- Explore opportunities for community transport services.

4.4 LOCAL ECONOMY AND TOURISM

Promote economic development and tourism opportunities based on the towns' low key coastal village atmosphere and natural environment.

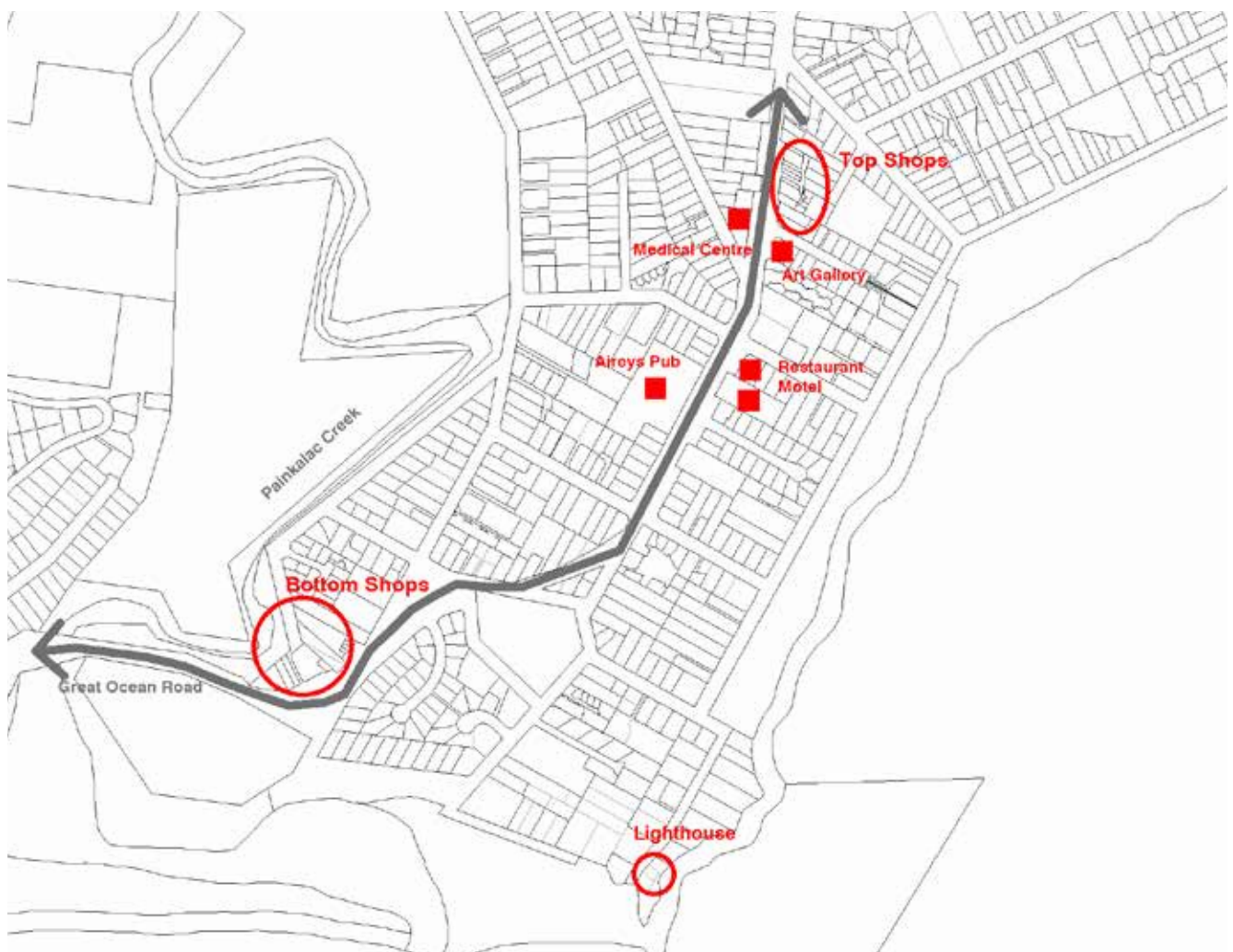
Commercial activity

A commercial assessment undertaken for Aireys Inlet (Tim Nott, 2014) showed that in total there is approximately 2,575m² of retail floorspace and approximately 1,100m² of commercial floorspace in Aireys Inlet. The **Top Shops**, located on the eastern side of the Great Ocean Road between Alice Road and Albert Avenue, has a predominant local service role servicing permanent and semi-permanent residents. The centre comprises approximately 900m² of retail floorspace and 255m² of commercial office floorspace, including a licensed general store, bakery, pharmacy, nursery, cafes, real estate agent and post office. The **Bottom Shops**, located on the western side of the Great Ocean Road

at the southern end of the Aireys Inlet township, has a visitor focus and comprises approximately 985m² of retail floorspace and 300m² of other commercial floorspace, including a video hire store, bookshop, hairdresser, fish & chips shop, cafes/restaurants, hardware store, real estate agent, holiday rentals office and a commercial display area.

In addition, a number of businesses are located on residential zoned land along the Great Ocean Road in between the two commercial centres, including a restaurant, art gallery, hotel, motel and medical centre (refer Figure 4).

Figure 4: Commercial activity centres, Aireys Inlet



The local economy is strongly focused on tourism. It is estimated that 20% of retail sales in Aireys Inlet comes from residents and 80% from visitors. There is a high level of escape expenditure to larger centres such as Anglesea, Lorne, Torquay, Waurn Pond and Geelong CBD, with only 18% of resident spending captured within Aireys Inlet. Residents and visitors to Aireys Inlet are required to travel to the larger centres for their major weekly grocery shopping requirements and for higher-order purchases (e.g. homewares, furniture, electrical, clothing).

The commercial assessment provides three scenarios for future commercial development for the period to 2031:

- 1. Scenario 1** assumes that population will not change over the period, but that growth in annual retail spending per resident, and proportional growth in visitor spending, will create a small increase in retail demand. Under this scenario 330m² of additional retail and commercial floorspace will be required. There is sufficient existing vacant space within the centres, particularly in the Bottom Shops, to accommodate this growth.
- 2. Scenario 2** assumes that the resident population and visitor numbers will grow by 0.7% per year and that this, along with growth in per capita spending, will generate a modest growth in retail demand. Under this scenario 875m² of additional retail and commercial floorspace will be required.
- 3. Scenario 3** assumes that the conditions are the same as for Scenario 2, but that a new supermarket of 900m² is developed which serves to reduce resident escape spending. Under this scenario approximately 2,010m² of additional retail and commercial floorspace will be required.

The future requirements for commercial development under each of these scenarios can be accommodated within the existing commercial centres. There is no need for additional commercial zoned land and future commercial development should be contained within the existing centres and not be allowed to spread along the Great Ocean Road. The existing use rights of commercial premises on residential zoned land along the Great Ocean Road are recognised however and these businesses, including the Aireys Pub, motel, restaurant, art gallery and medical centre, should be able to continue operating given their value to the community and visitors.

Opportunities for expansion within the Top Shops are limited, with only two small vacant lots remaining, however the Bottom Shops contain several large vacant and underutilised sites which could be intensified or redeveloped. Given the depth of these large sites, new retail businesses would likely prefer to locate near the frontage to the Great Ocean Road, whilst businesses that depend less on road frontage may locate further back. There may also be potential for these sites to accommodate residential development to the rear facing Painkalac Creek with access from River Reserve Road.

There are opportunities to improve the look and feel of the shopping areas through beautification and streetscape works to establish a more attractive, unified and characterful image, including a cohesive approach to shop facades, colours and materials; low key signage and artworks; the planting of trees to soften the built form and provide shade; improved pedestrian connections between the shops and adjoining areas (e.g. to the creek reserve and across the Great Ocean Road to the playground); active pedestrian frontages along the laneway and creek reserve; addition of outdoor seating areas; and undergrounding of overhead powerlines. There is also an opportunity to improve pedestrian connections between the two commercial precincts and to the Aireys pub/restaurant/motel precinct. An Urban Design Framework has been prepared for the Top and Bottom Shops in conjunction with this Structure Plan to provide a set of short and longer term recommendations for public realm improvements, including enhanced pedestrian amenity and access, landscaping, vehicle access, car parking and connections with surrounding areas. The scale and design of buildings within the commercial areas will continue to be guided by the *Aireys Inlet Commercial Areas Design Guidelines (2011)*. These guidelines were prepared to ensure new commercial development is sensitive to the existing and future character of Aireys Inlet.

Top Shops



Bottom Shops



Other commercial uses in Aireys Inlet



As discussed at Section 4.3, Council partially implemented parking management plans in 2014 to improve parking conditions at both centres. Further car parking improvements at the Bottom Shops are planned for the 2016/17 financial year. The proposed measures will increase the number of car parking spaces and include:

- Removal of one access point and replacement with 6 additional 90 degree parking spaces. Two access/exit points will remain in place.
- Reconfiguration of the majority of the service road to operate one-way (north-eastbound) with the exception of the southern section which will remain as two-way.
- Provision of additional formal parking spaces at the corner of Inlet Crescent and the Great Ocean Road service road (increase of 7 spaces).

Further parking capacity can be created by extending the service road when No. 73 Great Ocean Road is redeveloped and by encouraging the provision of shared public parking within redevelopment sites.

There are presently no public toilets at or in the vicinity of the Top Shops. The nearest public toilets are located 1.1km away at the playground opposite the Bottom Shops. It is considered that visitors and local residents would benefit from a toilet facility closer by. Although there is strong community and visitor support for public toilets at the Top Shops, previous attempts to find a suitable location were unsuccessful. Suggestions put forward during the first phases of community engagement for the Structure Plan to consider the provision of public toilets at the Community Hall (as an alternative to providing toilets at the Top Shops) have met with opposition from some community members. Concerns are centred on public toilets used by visitors and passing traffic being incompatible with the

community use of the hall reserve and school precinct. Because the community view is mixed and there is no clear consensus on an acceptable location, the Structure Plan will not provide any further directions around the provision of public toilets at the hall or Top Shops.

The Aireys Pub is recognised as a social hub, hosting events and family friendly activities, and is only one of a few entertainment venues in town. Its significance for the town was highlighted when its demise was nearly a reality several years ago when the previous licensees ceased operation and the pub was almost sold to a

developer who intended to turn the site into residential lots. With a site area of nearly 1.2ha, an existing pub that only occupies a relatively small portion of the land and a prime location, it is recognised that the site could be redeveloped in the future to expand on the existing business. The site lends itself for an integrated, mixed-use tourist-oriented development, with possible uses such as brewery, café, accommodation and tourist-related shops. The current residential zoning may be prohibitive in realising the potential and the need for a more suitable zone should be investigated at the appropriate time.

Objective 4.1: Encourage sustainable economic development and tourism that meets the needs of both residents and visitors

Strategies

- Consolidate commercial activity and development within the Top and Bottom Shops to create viable and attractive activity centres that provide for an appropriate range of retail and commercial services.
- Support existing commercial land uses between the two centres (e.g. pub, motel and restaurant).
- Recognise the value to the community of the Aireys Pub as a social focal point and entertainment venue, and facilitate future opportunities for additional tourist-oriented uses.
- Encourage commercial development that is of a design, scale and built form that reflects Aireys Inlet's low scale coastal village character, gives the centres an individual identity and respects the amenity of adjacent residential areas.
- Improve the quality of the public realm and pedestrian environment within the commercial centres.
- Ensure the efficient provision and management of car parking and long vehicle parking within and adjacent to the commercial centres.
- Improve the interaction between the Bottom Shops and the Painkalac Creek environs, while protecting the ecological values and characteristics of the creek corridor.
- Recognise, protect and enhance pedestrian access through the existing public laneway at the Bottom Shops between the Painkalac Creek and the commercial frontage.
- Enhance connections between the commercial centres and with the network of walking trails.

Actions

- Use the Aireys Inlet Commercial Areas Design Guidelines (2011) to guide built form in the Top and Bottom Shops.
- Implement the recommendations of the Aireys Inlet Top Shops and Bottom Shops Urban Design Framework (2015).
- Implement the Aireys Inlet Commercial Areas Car Parking Management Plans (2014), as appropriate.
- At the appropriate time, consider the possible rezoning of the Aireys Pub site to facilitate mixed-use tourist-oriented development.



Tourism

The Great Ocean Road is one of Australia's iconic road touring destinations. Each year approximately 7 million domestic and international visitors come to the Great Ocean Road Region and contribute over \$1 billion to the regional economy. Forecasts on this visitation are for it to reach 10 million by 2030. More locally, in 2013 Surf Coast Shire received a total of 1.67 million day and overnight visitors who spent over \$410 million in Surf Coast Shire's economy¹¹.

The benefits to the local economy from tourists and part-time residents are seasonal and casual, but can carry businesses through the slower months. Conversely, increasing visitor numbers and the swelling of the population at peak periods of the year has the potential to have a substantial impact upon the area's natural environment, valued landscapes and liveability, and puts pressure on existing services and infrastructure (e.g. roads, parking, water supply, waste collection, emergency services). While most people support tourists visiting the towns, the preference is for "slow tourism" that benefits local businesses rather than quick visits by large coaches packed with day-trippers who are self-sufficient, spend 5 minutes at a site and do not spend any money in town. The tourism product should be targeted at people who wish to stay longer and experience the towns and all they have to offer at a slower pace, particularly during the shoulder and

off-peak seasons. On average, each day visitor spends \$103 per trip, while an overnight visitor spends \$405 per person per trip, mainly on accommodation and cafes/restaurants. The capturing of this expenditure is therefore important for the sustainability of local businesses.

The Structure Plan seeks to build on the area's strong relationship with the natural environment by promoting opportunities for nature and adventure based tourism. The district offers numerous opportunities for a variety of active and passive outdoor recreational activities, including nature appreciation, bush walking, trail running, cycling, mountain biking, canoeing/kayaking, snorkelling, fishing/angling, rock pool rambling, surfing, paddle boarding, hang/paragliding and horse trail riding. These activities can attract visitors outside the traditional peak summer season.

Aireys Inlet also has a growing reputation as a destination for literary, art and music festivals, with popular events such as the Open Mic Music Festival, Literary Fest and Winter in Aireys. These events attract non-permanent residents and visitors outside peak holiday periods and contribute to making the town a year round tourist destination.

There are two significant tourist hot spots where the daily impacts of large and growing visitor numbers requires effective management in order to protect the natural

environment and residential amenity of nearby property owners. The Memorial Arch at Eastern View is one of the signature experiences of a journey along the Great Ocean Road for many national and international visitors. Visitors take a photo of the archway and the diggers statue, read the historic bronze plaque and learn about the Great Ocean Road and its status as the world's largest living war memorial.

Key issues at the site are:

- The lack of public toilets and insufficient rubbish bins, resulting in pollution from toileting and littering in the adjacent sand dunes and roadsides.
- Traffic safety issues within the car park and on the Great Ocean Road as a result of traffic movements and parking by the large number of coaches, mini buses and other tourist vehicles.

GORCC's *Fairhaven to Eastern View Master Plan (2015)* recognises these issues and has prompted the development of a separate master plan for the Archway precinct to further explore issues affecting the area, in consultation with relevant stakeholders and the community.

The Lighthouse precinct is another area that experiences high visitation and which lacks convenient visitor amenities, with the nearest toilets located 400m downhill from the lighthouse. The toilets at the tea rooms are available for patrons only.

A compounding issue associated with large part-time and visitor populations is emergency management in the event of a bushfire. Visitors are often unfamiliar or oblivious to fire prevention and evacuation procedures and the large number of people combined with limited road access/egress and traffic congestion makes evacuation difficult. VicRoads is working with Council and the CFA on the development of an emergency evacuation plan that takes into consideration the limitations of Aireys Inlet and the Great Ocean Road.

Some people suggested identifying ways for visitors to contribute financially to the provision, renewal and maintenance of facilities and amenities so that the local community does not bear an unfair cost to service tourist-specific amenities, or experience excessive adverse impacts from large visitor numbers. One suggested approach was licensing or registration of tour buses that include a visit to the Great Ocean Road in their tourism offer to provide an opportunity to leverage a financial contribution. That would also enable restrictions to be applied on access on critical fire risk days. Tour buses can be licensed under the *Victorian Public Land Tour Operator and Activity Provider Licences 2012* to

regulate the number and manage the impacts of large tourist coaches, however Council does not manage the Great Ocean Road or foreshore areas and is not authorised under the *Crown Land (Reserves) Act 1978* to enforce the licence requirements.

Spion Kop on the hill between Fairhaven and Moggs Creek is one of Victoria's most popular and iconic coastal hang-gliding and para-gliding sites. Powerlines along the Great Ocean Road restrict use of the site to endorsed pilots only. The Victorian Hang gliding and Paragliding Association (VHPA) and a local hang gliding club have been actively attempting to have the powerlines relocated or placed underground since the mid-1980s. Attempts have been unsuccessful. In 2010 Surf Coast Shire and GORCC held a public meeting in Aireys Inlet to discuss the undergrounding of powerlines between Spion Kop and Devil's Elbow near Spout Creek, which was estimated to cost \$3.5 million.

Removal of the visually intrusive structures would not only increase the safety, usage and attractiveness of the site for a greater number of hang and paragliders – which in turn would bring increased tourism dollars from visiting pilots along with their families and friends – but also enhance the scenic landscape values of the Great Ocean Road environs in this location, as well as reduce fire risk from electrical sparks and enhance road safety for motorists.

It is acknowledged that the Cypress Pines at the Great Ocean Road Memorial Arch at Eastern View have historical significance – they were planted by the Great Ocean Road Trust in the 1930s – and are protected under the national heritage listing of the Great Ocean Road, however they have reached the end of their life expectancy and have become unsightly and a major hazard, with many diseased and dying. It is recommended the trees be removed and the area rehabilitated.

Objective 4.2: Promote Aireys Inlet to Eastern View as a year round tourist destination while protecting the natural environment and residential amenity

Strategies

- Facilitate responsible visitor enjoyment and appreciation of the area's natural and cultural values.
- Encourage tourism developments, products and experiences that increase visitor length of stay and are sympathetic with the natural environment and character of the towns (e.g. small scale tourist offerings, eco-tourism, nature and adventure based recreational activities).
- Manage visitor demand at key visitor nodes to reduce adverse impacts on residents and the natural environment.
- Facilitate local events in the shoulder and off-peak seasons.
- Ensure sufficient rubbish bins are provided at key locations, including beach car parks and reserves.

Actions

- With GORRT, AITTA and other relevant stakeholders, develop a Destination Action Plan for Aireys Inlet to Eastern View to promote the area as a sustainable visitor destination.
- Work with GORCC, VicRoads and affected landowners to manage visitation and review visitor facilities, signage, parking and traffic management at the Great Ocean Road Memorial Arch at Eastern View.
- Request the removal of the mature cypress trees at the Great Ocean Road Memorial Arch at Eastern View.
- Investigate with relevant agencies and user organisations the feasibility of undergrounding powerlines between Spion Kop and Devil's Elbow.



5. Implementation

The actions identified within this Structure Plan will require implementation through a combination of implementation measures, including capital works by Council, initiation of new projects/studies, advocacy and actions by other agencies and organisations. The following tables summarise the actions along with proposed timeframes and indicative costs. Funding will

be subject to Council budget and government grant processes.

Capital works projects will require the preparation of detailed design plans to establish the scope and cost of the works. Costs included in the table are therefore a broad estimate only.

5.1 CAPITAL WORKS AND NEW INITIATIVES

Item	Lead Agency	Partner Agencies/ Organisations	Timing	Indicative Cost
Short Term (1-2 years)				
Planning Scheme Amendment – Structure Plan implementation	SCS	DELWP	2015/16	\$15,000
Anderson Roadknight Reserve & Hall Masterplan	SCS	Reserve/Hall CoM	2015/16	\$10,000
Aireys Inlet School Recreation Reserve & Masterplan contribution	SCS	Lorne-Aireys Inlet PS	2015/16	\$6,500
Top Shops bus stop all abilities access improvement	SCS		2015/16	\$5,000
Review of dog regulation signage (Shire wide project)	SCS	GORCC	2015/16	\$5,000
Bottom Shops pedestrian refuge	SCS	VicRoads	2015/16	\$160,000
Bottom Shops car parking improvements	SCS	VicRoads	2016/17	\$99,000
Aireys Inlet Destination Action Plan	GORRT	SCS	2016/17	Officer time
Fraser Drive opportunities study and design concepts	SCS	DHHS, RHA, AIDA, Community Garden	2016/17	\$15,000
Medium Term (3-5 years)				
Top Shops to Bottom Shops pathway improvements	SCS	VicRoads		\$75,000
Bambra Road pathway (River Reserve Rd to Old Coach Rd)	SCS			\$150,000
Painkalac Creek Trail East (River Reserve Rd to Old Coach Rd)	SCS	DELWP, CCMA		\$60,000
Investigate potential for Sandy Gully Trail (Aireys St to Sandy Gully Beach)	SCS			Officer time
Surf Coast Walk extension (planning/scoping)	SCS	GORCC, DELWP		Officer time
Sign audit and implementation (sign removal/replacement)	SCS	GORCC, VicRoads		\$5,000
Moggs Creek Reserve playground	SCS		2017/18	\$50,000
Top Shops and Bottom Shops UDF implementation – staged implementation of recommendations	SCS	VicRoads, CFA, DELWP, CCMA, AITTA, AIDA	Staged as per UDF	TBC
Longer Term (5+ years)				
Great Ocean Road powerlines relocation feasibility study (between Spion Kop and Devil's Elbow)	SCS	VicRoads, Powercor		\$10,000
Painkalac Creek Trail West (Narani Way to creek, including new pedestrian crossing to connect with east trail)	SCS	DELWP, CCMA		\$100,000
Investigate potential for Moggs Creek Trail (Great Ocean Rd to Boyd Ave)	SCS	DELWP, CCMA		Officer time

5.2 ONGOING ACTIONS AND ADVOCACY

Item	Responsible Agencies
Advocate for increased frequencies of V-Line bus services on the Great Ocean Road.	PTV
Advocate for seasonal speed limits through Aireys Inlet, Fairhaven, Moggs Creek and Eastern View.	VicRoads
Advocate for improved telecommunication services (mobile phone, broadband, Wi-Fi) to address blackspots, including temporary installations as an interim measure.	Department of Communications
Work with relevant land managers to manage visitation and improve visitor facilities and safety at the GOR Memorial Arch at Eastern View.	GORCC, VicRoads, DELWP, SC
Liaise with tour operators to limit access on extreme fire risk days.	SCS
Continue the Resilient Communities Program and other fire education programs/ activities.	SCS, CFA
Facilitate the removal of the old cypress trees at Eastern View.	VicRoads, DELWP
Review the provision of rubbish bins at beach car parks and reserves.	SCS, GORCC
Monitor access and parking conditions (including long vehicle parking) in the commercial centres, Lighthouse Precinct and beach car parks.	SCS, GORCC
At the appropriate time, consider the possible rezoning of the Aireys Pub site to facilitate mixed-use tourist-oriented development.	Landowners
Continue investigations into options for NSP-PLR's and/or shelters/refuges.	SCS, CFA
Continue the Great Ocean Road vegetation management program.	VicRoads
Work with emergency management agencies on emergency management plans/ procedures for the Great Ocean Road.	SCS, CFA, VicPol, SES, VicRoads
Update the BMO mapping to accurately reflect the hazard and provide for appropriate mitigation measures for communities at risk.	SCS, DELWP, CFA
Continue to work with and support other land managers and volunteer conservation groups on environmental enhancement works.	SCS, GORCC, CCMA, DELWP, Parks Victoria
Support further studies to determine the nature of risks associated with flooding, coastal acid sulfate soils and the effects of climate change within the area and develop appropriate responses to manage these risks, including consideration of planning scheme policies and overlays to control development in areas vulnerable to environmental hazards.	SCS, CCMA, DELWP, GORCC
Work with other land management agencies to facilitate a coordinated approach to open space and infrastructure planning, provision, maintenance and management.	GORCC, DELWP, Parks Victoria, VicRoads
Improve connections with and through the Great Otway National Park.	Parks Victoria

ACRONYMS

ABS	Australian Bureau of Statistics
AIDA	Aireys Inlet & District Association
AITTA	Aireys Inlet Tourism & Traders Association
BMO	Bushfire Management Overlay
CCMA	Corangamite Catchment Management Authority
CFA	Country Fire Authority
DELWP	Department of Environment, Land, Water and Planning
DHHS	Department of Health & Human Services
GORCC	Great Ocean Road Coast Committee
GORRT	Great Ocean Road Regional Tourism
NSP-PLR	Neighbourhood Safer Place – Place of Last Resort
OoH	Office of Housing
PTV	Public Transport Victoria
RHA	Registered Housing Association
SLSC	Surf Lifesaving Club

REFERENCES

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