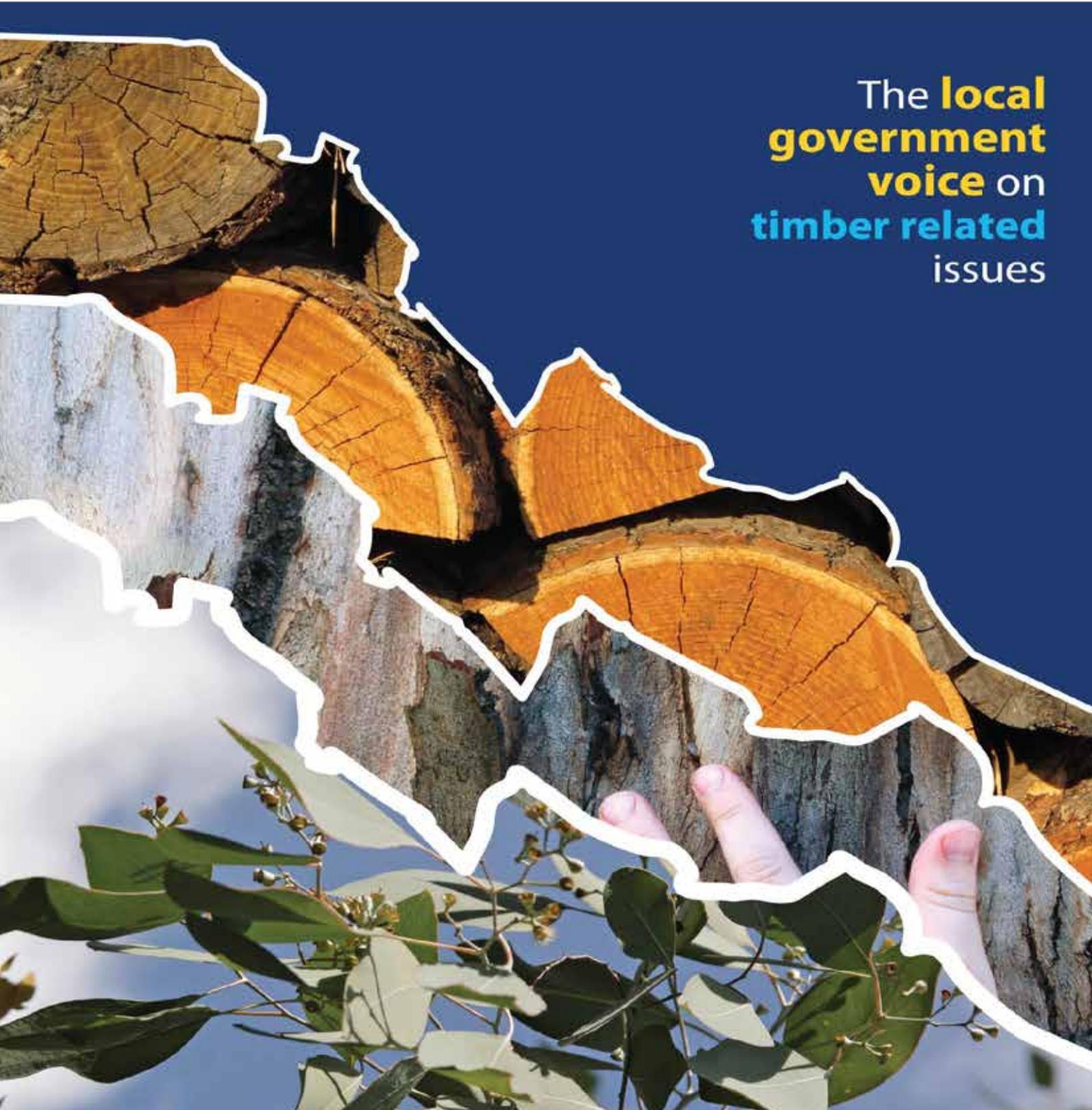


2020 - 2021 Annual Report



TIMBER TOWNS VICTORIA

The **local**
government
voice on
timber related
issues





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Introduction

Our history

Timber Towns Victoria (TTV) is an incorporated local government association representing the interests of municipal councils in relation to forestry on both public and private land. The Association's primary function is to provide a forum for local government to address the management of forests and forest industries and their impact on local communities.

Key policy areas

Timber Towns Victoria's priorities vary over time reflecting the changing nature of forest industry. However, several key long-term challenges face the local government sector in relation to the management of forests on both public and private land.

These include the:

- provision, maintenance, and funding of infrastructure required for timber haulage
 - long term social and economic viability of communities reliant on forest related industries and the impact of policy change on such communities.
 - valuation and rating of private and leased land used for commercial timber production
 - fulfilment of legislative responsibilities for ensuring compliance with forestry regulations on private land.
- 
- planning control of plantation expansion to ensure balanced and appropriate land use and adequate fire prevention.
 - responsibility as representatives of diverse communities, to ensure that Victorian forests on public and private land are managed sustainably for the long-term benefit of all forest users.

What we do

Representation and advocacy

TTV provides an important service to member councils which includes the increased ability to liaise with the state and federal government, an important information service and the value of being involved with a state-wide network.

Recognised as the peak local government body on forestry, TTV provides policy advice on various forestry policy and planning matters.

A core objective of the association is to provide all Victorian municipalities, with an interest in forest management the opportunity to actively contribute to policy setting and information dissemination as required.

TTV has links with similar associations in other states to increase local governments capacity to be effectively involved in forestry policy setting at both the national and state level.

Our objectives

- To provide leadership and advocacy for the interests of local government on the impact of timber related issues on local government and their communities, particularly roads infrastructure
- To provide a forum for local government to share information and to address timber related issues that affect local government communities
- To be a credible and respected stakeholder on timber issues, representing local government in working with the community, all levels of governments and the timber industry
- To support and assist councils managing the impact of timber related issues
- To support sustainable communities and local government infrastructure.



Communication

TTV delivers an important communication service to its member councils, providing regular information about forestry policy and management initiatives. The association communicates directly with member councils through delegated representatives, with circulated media releases, submissions, through the association's Facebook and a resource portfolio on our website.

TTV facilitates the sharing of knowledge, experience and information between its members through regular meetings of representatives and other communication channels.



President's Report

Cr Karen Stephens

It is my pleasure to present TTV's annual report on behalf of our members. What a year it has been. The Victorian Government's announcement in late 2019 that they would start phasing out the native timber industry set the tone for much of our work.

The announcement came at the end of a difficult year when many communities in Victoria's native timber heartland were still suffering the overwhelming economy damage and job losses wrought by drought, bushfires, loss of the 2019-20 tourism season and the pandemic. The State Government's announcement could not have come at a worse time.

We have sought every opportunity to advocate on behalf of these communities and ask the State Government to rethink the ban. We want the Government, at the very least, to understand the impact of the ban; a decision which appears to be driven by politics rather than hard facts.

We know that Victoria has the capacity to maintain a financially viable and sustainable native timber industry supporting thousands of workers, their families and businesses in regional communities, while protecting Old Growth Forest and endangered wildlife, if the Victorian Government will allow it to operate.



Wellington Shire Council has been instrumental in setting up a Native Timber Taskforce, the purpose of which is to bring together all involved parties to understand the impact of the ban for communities across the native timber areas.

Regional Victorians understand the importance the timber industry – we know this is not the case for many people outside the regions. Therefore, the work of Wellington Shire and East Gippsland Shire to understand and put a dollar figure on the domestic value of the timber industry in those two shires has been so valuable. We will now look to developing a similar report of the domestic value add of the industry across other shires in Victoria.

We have made important submissions to the government policy reviews that affect the timber industry, including the impending review of the



Code of Practice for Timber Production, and will continue to keep abreast on the development of policy for koala management. This is all part of our strategy to promote the many environmental, as well as economic, benefits of the timber industry. We know that the carbon storage and environmental benefits of native forestry are not clearly understood, and will make this a focus of future advocacy.

Looking to the year ahead, we will also promote the importance of native timber to our local construction and furniture manufacturing industry along with continuing to promote the benefits of the timber industry for our regional economies, jobs, communities, and our environment.

Together, we have met the key principles that we set out to achieve. This was made possible with the assistance of Rachael and I take this opportunity to sincerely thank her for her secretariat support, which has been invaluable.

To executive members Rob & Tom and all general members I sincerely thank you for your dedication and support throughout the year.

Yours sincerely,

Cr Karen Stephens



Membership

Membership of the association is open to all Victorian municipalities where forest industries are recognised as significant contributors to the economy and community.

Forest based industries and other interest groups are not represented by the Association.

Each member council may nominate two representatives to attend meetings, one of whom must be an elected councillor.

Administration of TTV is vested in the Executive Committee. A President, Vice President and Treasurer are appointed annually, and the Association is supported by a part-time administration support officer. Members meet on alternate months to the General Meetings of Association.

TTV has 10 member councils across the state. These are grouped below according to the Victorian regions, and in a map on Victoria containing Municipal Council Boundaries.

Gippsland	Central	South West
Baw Baw Shire Council	Colac Otway Shire Council	Glenelg Shire Council
East Gippsland Shire Council	Golden Plains Shire Council	Moyne Shire Council
Latrobe City Council	Moorabool Shire Council	
Wellington Shire Council	Pyrenees Shire Council	



Executive Committee

2020 – 2021



President
Cr Karen Stephens
Glenelg Shire Council



Vice President
Cr Robert Vance
Pyrenees Shire



Treasurer
Cr Tom Sullivan
Moorabool Shire



Executive Member
Cr Jim Doukas
Moyne Shire



Executive Member
Cr Michael Leaney
Baw Baw



Executive Member
***Cr Richard Ellis**
East Gippsland



Executive Member
****Cr Sonia Buckley**
East Gippsland



Executive Member
Mr Greg Burgoyne
Glenelg Shire



Executive Member
***Cr Des Phelan**
Golden Plains Shire



Executive Member
****Cr Chris Potter**
Colac Otway Shire

* 2 July 2020 – Victorian Local Government Election October 2020

** 16 December 2020 – Current



TTV membership and services

Timber Towns Victoria delivers information and updates, to members keeping members informed on industry issues and activities.

Throughout the year invited guest speakers attended TTV meetings, including:

- Professor Rod Keenan, Chair of Forest and Ecosystem Sciences, Melbourne University
- Michelle Freeman, National Vice President, Institute of Foresters of Australia
- David Bennet, Secretary of Gippsland Agroforestry Network and Gippsland Chapter Australian Forest Growers
- Peter Devonshire, President of Gippsland Agroforestry Network and Chair of Latrobe Catchment Landcare Network
- Deb Kerr, Chief Executive Officer, Victorian Forest Products Association

Timber Towns Victoria invites councils that feel they would benefit from involvement in the Association, while encouraging members to actively participate in Association processes, such as the creation of government submissions and periodic reviews of the strategic plan.

An induction package for elected council members and CEOs was developed to provide new members an overview and an understanding of Timber Towns Victoria what they do for Councils and communities.

A brand new TTV website was launched in July 2020. Members have a 'members only' log in area of the TTV website which allows viewing of sensitive documents and information.

TTV website can be found at <https://timbertownsvictoria.com.au/>



Strategic direction

Addressed in 2020 – 2021

Government Relations

The development of constructive relationships with the state and federal governments is important to the association with TTV engaging with the government at every opportunity over the past year wherever possible. Submissions have been made to key strategic reviews of government policy and items that affect the timber sector.

Koala management strategy review

TTV met with Timber industry bodies in relation to the review with TTV members agreeing to keep abreast of the detail of the review as they become available. A request was made to the Hon. Lily D'Ambrosio MP, Minister for Energy, Environment and Climate Change office to continue to engage with TTV as the review moved forward.

Committee of the Office of the Conservation Regulator

The Committee of the Office of Conservation Regulator (OCR) was created in 2019 as an agency within the Department of Environment, Land, Water and Planning (DELWP) following the Independent Review of Timber Harvesting Regulation in Victoria's public native forests. TTV wrote to the Minister D'Ambrosio requesting that TTV be considered for a position on the committee, we were subsequently referred to the Committee of the Office of the Conservation Regulator and declined.

China's decision to suspend log imports from Victoria following identification of bark beetles

TTV wrote to the Hon Dan Tehan MP, Federal Minister for Trade, Tourism and Investment and the Hon Jonathon Duniham MP, Federal Assistant Minister for Forestry and Fisheries in November 2020 expressing concern regarding the impact of China's decision to suspend log imports from Victoria following identification of bark beetles in some consignments.

In response the Australian Government acknowledged that it had written to the Chinese authorities seeking an end to the suspension of log imports and assured TTV they were continuing to engage with industry on the situation to ensure log exporters adhere to the necessary biosecurity standards to restore that trade with China.

Native timber industry advocacy

In November 2019, the Victorian State Government announced the Native Timber Harvesting industry in Victoria would be phased out by 2030. TTV has vociferously opposed the planned phase out and embarked on a campaign to raise awareness of the impact of the ban on jobs, rural economies, communities and the environment.

The advocacy campaign, determined by TTV members, has focused on promoting the benefits of native timber industry for direct jobs, downstream jobs (furniture and construction industries) along with raising awareness of the impact of the phase out on regional Victoria.



Code of Practice for Timber Production 2021 Proposed Variation Review

TTV entered a submission to the Victorian Government on the review of the Code of Practice for Timber Production which is the primary regulatory document for timber harvesting in Victoria's forest. It is envisaged that the Victorian Government will comprehensively review the code by the end of 2023 and have made a commitment to modernised Regional Forest Agreements.

TTV will continue to participate in the review and will be advocating for clarity, and a focus based on science and evidence to ensure the timber industry can operate safely with policy and certainty thus creating confidence to invest in a sustainable timber industry.

Bush Fire recovery

The devastating impact of the Victorian 2019-20 summer bushfires was felt in many of our timber communities. TTV wrote to the Premier, Minister for Local Government and the Leader of the Opposition asking them to acknowledge the timber industry and the use of industry machinery throughout the bushfires and for some common sense around the immediate harvesting of burnt timber, throughout the impacted areas.

Following this push by TTV – the Hon Jaclyn Symes, Victorian Minister for Resources released a paper entitled 'Bushfire Affected Timber to Be Salvaged for The Future' which outlined how timber burned by bushfires would be saved from going to waste.

TIRES Timber Industry Roads Evaluation Study

The Timber Impact Roads Evaluation Study (TIRES) is an evaluation study of road management strategies and investment for timber industry roads in Victoria. The Victorian timber industry is a substantial contributor to the state's regional and overall economies and is widely dispersed across the state, placing significant demands on Victorian road infrastructure.

TIRES identifies the local road infrastructure required for the efficient operation of the Victorian forest industry, focusing on the first mile; the local roads utilised at the beginning of each timber run, currently unmaintained by state funding.

The last TIRES report produced by Timber Towns Victoria was 'The First Mile 2016 – 2020'.

A TIRES Scoping Report was created for consideration by members for an update of the Timber Impact Roads Evaluation Study in April 2020. This report was placed on the table whilst gathering information from the government regarding the National Transit Study.

TIRES reporting continues to be an important tool in advocating for infrastructure funding to timber impacted municipalities helping identify issues of safety, efficiency and bottlenecks; and Timber Towns Victoria will revisit this topic with members to update this report in due course.





Vale Cr Malcolm Hole

“

Timber Towns, when it goes in on behalf of the community, is actually going in for the benefit of all the community, not just the timber industry¹.

- *Malcolm Hole*



Malcolm Hole hailed from the Heyfield community in the Wellington Shire where timber has had a profound existence in the district for many years. He was a founding member of Timber Towns Victoria, serving as President 2003 - 2010 and remained a strong advocate for the timber industry particularly across the Gippsland region for many years.

Malcolm carried a depth of knowledge of the industry and held many networks within all levels of government and within the timber industry.

Since the Victorian State Government decision to cease native timber harvesting in November 2019, Malcolm had been at the forefront of advocacy to the government and campaigning at many levels to ensure that jobs are saved for the benefit of all communities across the Gippsland region.

This led to Malcolm being the driving force to ensure that the Native Timber Taskforce committee was established through the Wellington Shire Council in collaboration with the East Gippsland Shire Council.

¹ Taken from Joely Taylors interview transcript for the book, Let Sanity Prevail, 2 July 2014



Australian Sustainable
Hardwood Mill @ Heyfield

“I’ve known Malcolm Hole since the early 1990s with us both being involved with Timber Towns Victoria.

It was on the back of when I congratulated him with a message on a re-election to council, he sent me a message of congratulations when I was also re-elected which read ‘Well done you cheeky bugger’. Malcolm dedicated his life to the timber industry, and we seemed to have something in common and a great respect for one another.”

- Cr Robert Vance
Pyrenees Shire Council

“Malcom will be dearly missed by many and at our April 2021 TTV meeting we all agreed that we would always ‘smile’ when we think of him!”

- Cr Karen Stephens
TTV President Glenelg Shire Council

“I cannot remember when I first met Malcolm, but it was through my association with Timber Towns Victoria and have known him now for at least 20 years.

Malcolm was a force of nature and was very passionate about rural communities whose life blood was forestry and timber.

His enthusiasm and passion for the timber industry and the small and medium towns dependent on forestry was infectious.

They say there is no such thing as a self-made man as we are a part of everyone we have met in life.

I am thankful to have met Malcolm Hole and feel I am the better for it. Rest in peace Malcolm.”

- Cr Tom Sullivan
Mayor, Moorabool Shire Council



Treasurer's Report

TIMBER TOWNS ASSOCIATION INC.

STATEMENT OF INCOME & EXPENDITURE FOR THE PERIOD 1ST JULY 2020 TO 30TH JUNE 2021



CASH BOOK BALANCE AT 1ST JULY 2020	\$90,131.54	
ADD RECEIPTS		
ATO – BAS Refund	691.00	
Subscriptions	16,500.00	
Interest	6.29	<u>17,197.29</u>
	\$107,328.83	
LESS PAYMENTS		
GST Paid	2,340.91	
Flowers	75.00	
Bank Fees	17.06	
Website Cost	1,712.09	
Secretarial Fees	14,594.70	
Phone, Computer and Fax	195.04	
Consumer Affairs Vic Fees	481.10	
Accounting Fees	3,160.00	
Consultancy Fees	5,819.90	
Advertising	6,750.00	
Printing & Stationery	50.23	
ATO – GST BAS Payments	948.00	<u>36,144.03</u>
CASH BOOK BALANCE AT 30TH JUNE 2021		<u><u>\$71,184.80</u></u>
BANK STATEMENT AS CASH BOOK AT 30TH JUNE 2021		<u><u>\$71,184.80</u></u>

NOTES

FORMING PART OF THE
STATEMENT OF INCOME & EXPENDITURE
FOR THE PERIOD 1ST JULY 2020 TO 30TH JUNE 2021

SUBSCRIPTIONS

Moorabool Shire	2,750.00
Glenelg Shire	2,750.00
Pyrenees Shire	2,750.00
Golden Plains Shire	2,750.00
Baw Baw Shire	2,750.00
Latrobe City Shire	2,750.00
TOTAL	\$16,500.00

**STATEMENT OF INCOME & EXPENDITURE
SANDHURST SELECT MORTGAGE FUND
FOR THE PERIOD 1ST JULY 2020 TO 30TH JUNE 2021**

SANDHURST ACCOUNT BALANCE AT 1ST JULY 2020		\$122,761.37
ADD RECEIPTS		
Interest Received	875.36	875.36
		123,636.73
LESS PAYMENTS		
Nil		
SANDHURST ACCOUNT BALANCE AT 30TH JUNE 2021		\$123,636.73

I recommend Timber Towns Victoria members receive this report.

Cr Tom Sullivan

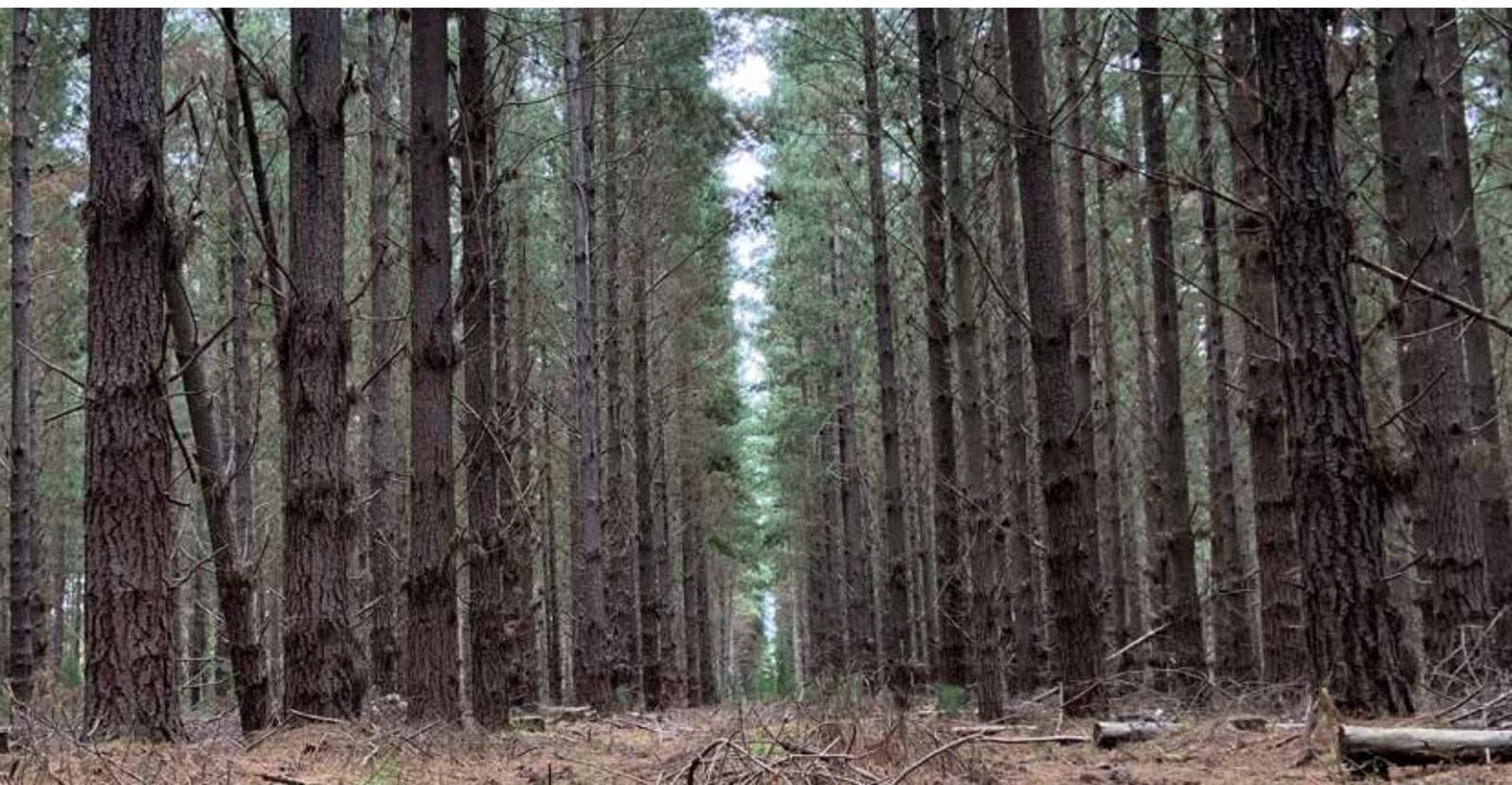
Treasurer

Timber Towns Victoria



Timber Towns Victoria Presidents

Start	Finish	Name	Shire
1984	1987	Brenda Murray	Shire of Orbost
1987	1988	Alan Billing	Shire of Colac
1989	1990	Paul Gilmore	Shire of Alexandra
1990	1990	Kevin Smith	Shire of Myrtleford
1990	1990	Paul Gilmore	Shire of Alexandra
1993	1994	Jim Ure	Mitchell Shire
1994		Amalgamation	
1995		Amalgamation	
1996	1998	Jim Ure	Mitchell Shire
1999	2000	Noel Harvey	Macedon Ranges Shire
2000	2003	Bob Orr	Hepburn Shire
2003	2003	Jenny Blake	Golden Plains Shire
2003	2010	Malcolm Hole	Wellington Shire
2011	2012	Bill Harrington	Baw Baw Shire
2012	2016	Jan Vonarx	Alpine Shire
2017	Current	Karen Stephens	Glenelg Shire







TIMBER TOWNS VICTORIA

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