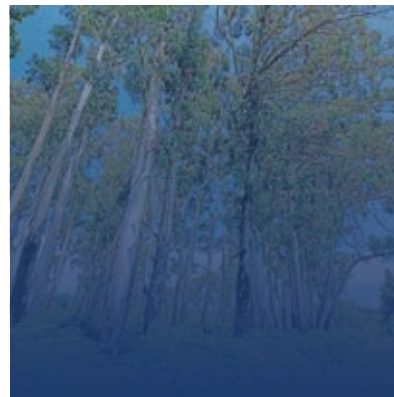
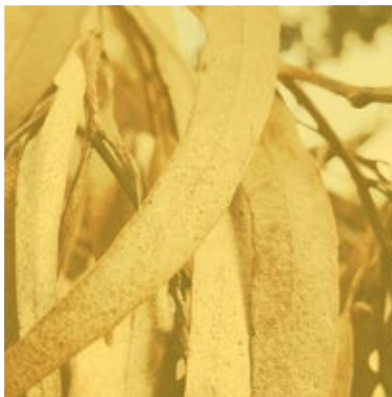
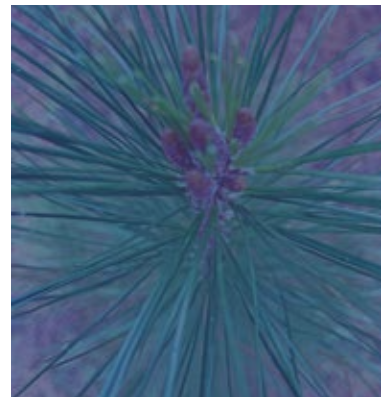
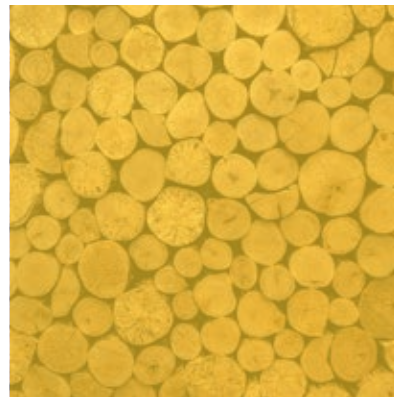




TIMBER TOWNS VICTORIA



# 2023 - 2024

## ANNUAL REPORT



*The local government  
voice on timber  
related matters*

Previous Annual Reports can be found on our website

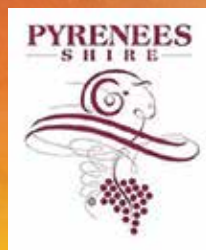
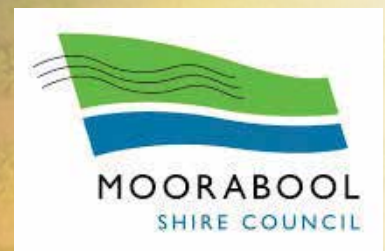


Postal: PO Box 152, Portland Vic 3305  
 Phone: 0428 891 728  
 Email: [secretary@timbertownsvictoria.com.au](mailto:secretary@timbertownsvictoria.com.au)  
 Website: [www.timbertownsvictoria.com.au](http://www.timbertownsvictoria.com.au)

# Contents

TTV Members .....	2
President's report .....	3
Executive Committee 2023 – 2024 .....	4
Introduction.....	5
Strategic directions addressed in 2023 – 2024 .....	6
TTV 2023 Forum & AGM – South West Victoria .....	8
The cessation of native forest harvesting in Victoria – TTV Position paper .....	10
Moving forward: The new Strategic Plan 2025 – 2027 .....	11
TIRES - Timber Industry Roads Evaluation Study 2023 - 2027.....	12
Membership .....	13
Membership and Services.....	14
Treasurers Report.....	15
Timber Towns Victoria Presidents .....	17

# Members



# Presidents Report

Celebrating 40 years since its first inception in 1984, I am pleased to present the Timber Towns Victoria 2024 Annual Report on behalf of our member Councils.

The future of Timber Towns changed on 1 January 2024 marking the end of commercial harvesting of native timber in Victoria. With this decision came a multitude of consequences for industry and communities to deal with and work through. Timber Towns Victoria was at the ready to assist and support our member communities through our Council members and fellow industry Associations such as the Australian Forest Contractors Association and the Victorian Forest Products Association during these challenging times.

Some questions still remain around the ongoing future of active forest management and threat of bushfires to these forests that were once maintained by VicForests and their contractors. There is still much work to do, and a long way to go with regards to Victoria's future forestry industry. Victoria must be able to position itself to future proof a thriving sustainable plantation forestry industry and ensure that the regional towns benefit. This requires good policies and regulations that guarantee forests planted for future harvesting are assured once trees are mature and ready for harvest.

TTV members spent considerable time and effort developing and planning for the future of timber as a resource within the Victorian landscape and released our Position Paper late in 2023. Some of the key outcomes include: embracing plantation forestry and protecting their access for future harvest, diversifying economic activities within our communities, ensuring investment in infrastructure for road and rail networks, addressing community fire risks, and encourage expansion of plantation forestry solutions by ensuring that the legislation and regulations support the sector.

This has now been followed by the review of our Strategic Plan 2025-2027 which will guide and provide key principles to the committee moving forward. The revision to this strategy has given Timber Towns Victoria an opportunity to consider the future strategic direction for the benefit of TTV and it's member councils due to the Victorian Government decision to close access to the State native forest for commercial harvesting. Key deliverables that

TTV will continue working on with our members is to keep robust and active government relations, focusing on transport, infrastructure and wood processing; and support land use management and planning. We will also commit

to continuing effective communications and facilitate member services through our engagement with media, local, state and federal government; conducting forums and other events; and providing assistance to our members on forestry matters.

As the local government sector in Victoria moves towards a General Election for all Councils, we will see new Elected Members for 2024-2028. This means, we will farewell our long-standing member Cr Rob Vance from the Pyrenees Shire as he retires from local government after a stellar career of 29 years since 1987. Rob has been a TTV member since the late 80s and I would personally like to thank Rob for his guidance and support over many years on the TTV Executive Committee – always considered and polite, a true gentleman, I thank you.

In conclusion, the cessation of commercial native timber harvesting on January 1, 2024, has presented numerous challenges and necessitated extensive support and adaptation efforts from TTV and its members. The organisation's proactive stance in developing a Position Paper and revising its Strategic Plan 2025-2027 highlights a commitment to fostering a sustainable and diversified forestry sector. Emphasising plantation forestry, infrastructure development, and robust policy frameworks, TTV aims to secure the future of regional towns and the forestry industry in Victoria.

Yours sincerely,



Cr Karen Stephens



<sup>^</sup> Australian Bluegum Plantations Human Resources Manager Sheri Tarr with Timber Towns Victoria President Cr Karen Stephens at ABP's inaugural Women in Wood Fibre event, Cape Bridgewater.

# Executive Committee



Glenelg Shire  
**President and Chair**  
**Cr Karen Stephens**



Baw Baw  
**Vice President**  
**Cr Michael Leaney**



Moorabool Shire  
**Treasurer**  
**Cr Tom Sullivan**

Glenelg Shire  
**Administration Support Officer**  
**Rachael Healy**

Gannawarra Shire  
**Executive Member**  
**Cr Garner Smith**

Golden Plains Shire  
**Executive Member**  
**Cr Ian Getsom**

Colac Otway Shire  
**Executive Member**  
**Cr Tosh-Jake Finnigan**

Wellington  
**Executive Member**  
**Mark Coleman**

Glenelg Shire  
**Executive Member**  
**Craig Nieman CEO**



∨ Cr Michael Leaney Cr Karen Stephens at Parliament House, Canberra in 2024



# Introduction

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.

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

General meetings of the Association are held bi-monthly where actions are recorded and detailed work proceeds between meetings.

## Our Mission

Timber Towns Victoria (TTV) is the local government voice on timber related matters and their impact on local communities and local government infrastructure.

## Our History

As the association reaches the end of its fortieth year of operation, it has developed credibility over the years by remaining impartial and acting in the best interests of the entire community rather than one particular group. Passionate people, committed to open communication and education about the timber industry have helped the association remain relevant over time.

‘It is amazing to see how Timber Towns Victoria, which took root back in 1984, has grown over the years... Timber Towns Victoria continues to grow and, ever so slight, change path to suit the needs of our members; focusing on the social, economic and environmental issues that arise in councils’ relationship with the Victorian forest industry. The forest industry is in a perpetual state of change and Timber Towns Victoria will change along with it, however, as long as there are trees in the ground and we have the support of our member councils, Timber Towns Victoria will remain relevant and proud to represent the sector.’ – Cr Jan Vonarx forward – Taylor, J. 2015. Let Sanity Prevail: the history of Timber Towns Victoria. Billycan Press, Camberwell Victoria.

Timber Towns Victoria was formed to represent 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.

## Our Objectives

- To deliver leadership and advocacy for the interests of local government and their communities, particularly road and bridge infrastructure.
- To provide a forum for local government to share information and to address timber related issues.
- 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.



# Strategic direction

Addressed in 2023 - 2024

## Government Relations

Timber Towns Victoria continues to maintain relationships with government representatives in relation to timber matters with both the State and Federal Governments.

Timber Towns Victoria President Cr Karen Stephens continues to hold representation on the Victorian Forestry Plan Advisory Committee since December 2021.

Timber Towns Victoria made submissions to the following subjects in the 2023 / 2024 membership year:

- 2023 Federal Government Agriculture, Land and Emissions Discussion Paper
- 2024 Victorian Freight Plan Review

## Other interactions with Government

March 2024 – Timber Towns Victoria received a response from Minister for Environment, Steve Dimopoulos MP Outlining Victorian Governments commitments to deliver key sustainable forest management activities.

January 2024 – Timber Towns Victoria received interim response from the State Government Policy and Planning Division acknowledging TTV's letter sent to the Hon Jacinta Allan MP, Premier of Victoria.

November 2023 – Timber Towns Victoria wrote to the Premier, the Hon Jacinta Allan MP and the Hon Ros Spence MP, Minister for Agriculture regarding sustainable forest management practices.

July 2023 – Victorian Forestry Transition Implementation Reference Group was established and Cr Karen Stephens accepted an invitation to join the group for a three year period with a purpose to:

- advise on the design and implementation of business, community and worker support programs under the Forestry Transition Program
- provide feedback to improve the success of programs under the Forestry Transition Program, with a particular focus on

the outcomes for affected businesses, communities and workers, and

- provide advice on other matters (risks, opportunities and gaps) that may assist in the successful implementation of business, community and worker support programs under the Forestry Transition Program.

June 2023 – The Support Plantation Establishment Program was rolled out in three batches over six months to support new long-rotation softwood and hardwood plantation forests.

## Transport and Infrastructure

TTV partners with the Victorian Government to provide a 5 yearly review of the [Timber Industry Roads Evaluations Study \(TIRES\) Report 2023-2027](#).

The TIRES report 2023-2027 provides an evidence-based framework to prioritise infrastructure investment across the Victorian rural road network utilised by the timber sector.

TTV understands that Victoria's roads are a key economic enabler and a pillar of the state's eminence as a commodity exporter. How quickly and efficiently we can move our exports to port underpins Victoria's competitiveness in global markets.

The Timber Industry Roads Evaluation Study (TIRES) report has been used as a tool by member Councils to highlight in funding applications for upgrades to the road transport infrastructure that supports the timber industry across Victoria.

## Land Use Management

May 2023 – The Victorian State Government announced that the ban on native timber harvesting would be brought forward to January 1 2024. In response, Timber Towns Victoria developed a position paper later in 2023 on the subject that is detailed further on in this report.



## TTV Communications

Timber Towns Victoria actively increases awareness of Timber Towns Victoria and timber related matters concerning communities and infrastructure through a number of different avenues including:

- Maintaining an active social media presence on [Facebook](#) and [Twitter](#).
- Updating the [Timber Towns Victoria website](#) with relevant news and informative documents
- Through media releases to the broader Victorian media 2023 – 2024:
  - 1 January 2024 - [Victorian forestry Communities mourn the loss of a once vibrant industry](#)
  - 1 September 2023 - [Timber Towns Victoria calls for certainty for the future of forestry in Victoria](#)

Timber Towns Victoria continues to maintain representation on appropriate external committees and groups ensuring consistent timber related messages are conveyed. TTV is an active member or seeks updates from the following groups for the benefit of our members:

- Australian Forest Products Association
- Victorian Forest Products Association
- Forestry Australia
- Forest and Woods Products Australia
- Australian Forest Contractors Association
- Collaborative Communications Group
- Green Triangle Forestry Industry Hub
- Gippsland Forestry Hub
- Native Timber Taskforce
- Forest and Woods Communities Australia
- National Timber Councils Association
- Gippsland Forest Dialogue
- Murray Region Forestry Hub
- National Timber Councils association
- Forestry Transition Implementation Reference Group

# 2023 Forum & AGM

Portland – Mumbannar – Tarpeena – Mount Gambier – Nelson, Green Triangle, South West Victoria

Timber Towns Victoria Members held a three-day forum in Portland, Victoria, from Wednesday, 30 August 2023, to Friday, 1 September 2023. Members were treated to multiple guest speakers and tours to various sites throughout the Green Triangle Region.

## Day 1

After a comprehensive overview of the Green Triangle Plantation region, members toured the Port of Portland and gained a greater understanding of the port's importance to the region's forestry sector. The highlight of the tour was seeing up close the three 'rocket launches' truck unloading facilities.

## Day 2

The group witnessed a site 'in field' chipping operation near Mumbannar in SW Victoria before heading over the border to the Timberlink Sawmill in Tarpeena and then onto the OneFortyOne Sawmill in Mount Gambier.

## Day 3

Members came together for our AGM. Guest Speaker the Hon Joel Fitzgibbon, presented on the national Forestry Sector from his wealth of experience after many years within the Federal Government.

Our special thanks go to the following people: Port of Portland CEO Greg Burgoyne, together with Michael Carr and Shannan Curran; Tony Wight GTFIHub; Gus McLean ABP; Gavin Dohnt LV Dohnt & Co; Steve McGinty Timberlink; and Nigel Boyd OneFortyOne, who all welcomed us, supported us, and freely gave of their time—we sincerely thank you.





# The cessation of native forest harvesting in Victoria

– Position paper



In 2023, Timber Towns Victoria and its member councils closely considered the implications of the cessation of harvesting of native forests in Victoria from the end of 2023 and produced a [position statement](#) for the purpose of engaging with state government on the current and future impacts and challenges that Victorian Timber Towns face, highlighting possible solutions for the future.

In considering solutions for the future, Timber Towns Victoria and its members have focussed on immediate needs, transitional needs and long-term support.

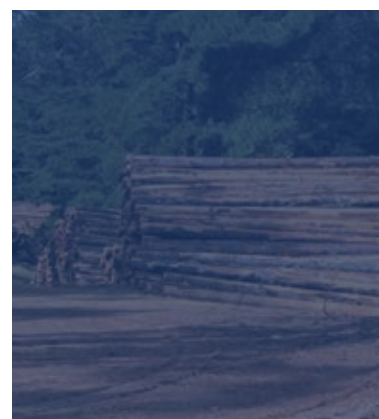
Timber communities understand their sustainability relies on an economic foundation. Plantation forestry, either broadacre or integrated with farming (agroforestry), will likely dominate future timber towns in Victoria.

Some plantations will focus on solid wood extraction for income, while others will tap into environmental services like carbon credits.

The future decisions of plantation landowners within the industry will dictate access to and re-plantation of these areas.

While many of our communities are experiencing difficult times right now, there is a pathway that can see timber towns in Victoria thrive into the future.

To read more please find the position paper on the Timber Towns Victoria website [www.timbertownsvictoria.com.au](http://www.timbertownsvictoria.com.au)



# Moving forward: The new Strategic Plan

2025 - 2027

In the process of revising the strategic plan, TTV remains committed to its mission to promote the benefits of wood and its uses, from a carbon, land-use option, local processing, business and employment perspective, especially for Victoria's rural and regional municipalities.

Timber, derived from forestry activities and the wood products industry, is important to many Victorian communities and municipalities. The integrated and sustainable industry provides ongoing employment and business opportunities, supplying building, communication, packaging and other industrial products into Australian and international markets. The industry's activities provide a net carbon benefit.

The closure of access to Victoria's native forests for commercial harvesting from 1 January 2024 has significant consequences for TTV and its member councils. Some municipalities will cease to have any primary forestry activities, and many will experience changes, including reduced employment and business opportunities.

Plantation forestry continues in Victoria and the significant majority of downstream processing in the State is supplied by plantations, including for exports. Plantation expansion is an industry priority for several shires, ensuring land-use considerations remain at the forefront of public policy at a municipal, state and national level.

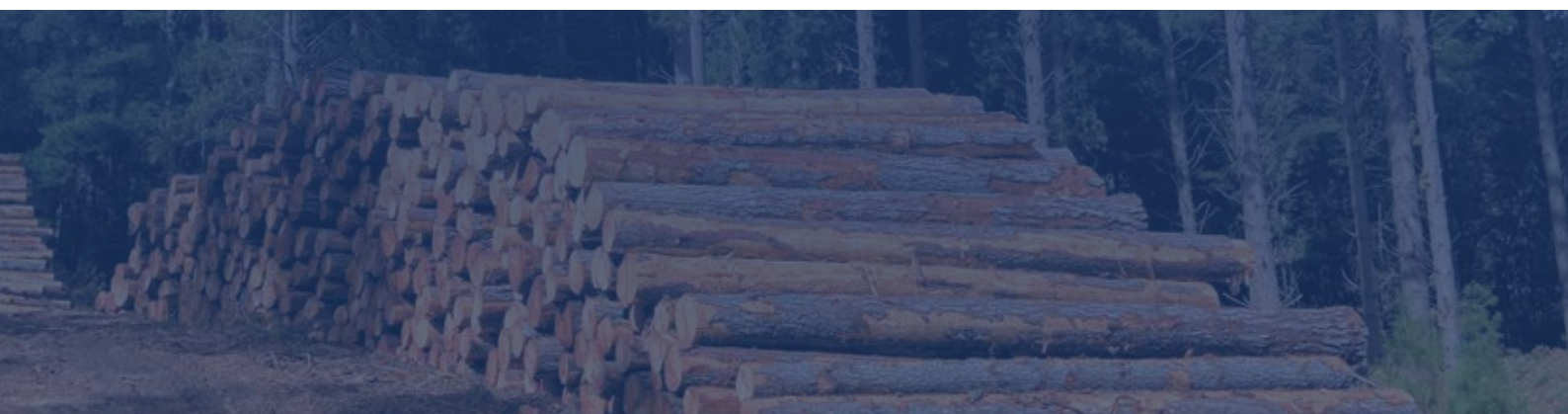
While the changes are challenging, they also present opportunities, especially those related to plantation expansion, to downstream processing and ultimately to related employment and business opportunities.

As TTV outlined in 2023, while it regrets the decision to close access to Victoria's native forests, it recognises there is a collective need for Victoria to, in summary:

1. Embrace plantation forestry, including farm forestry and agro-forestry initiatives
2. Protect access to plantations and provide legislative and regulatory support for plantation forestry
3. Diversify economic activities and support transitions to a more plantation focussed industry
4. Invest in infrastructure, wood processing capability and investigate new opportunities for wood supply
5. Address fire and other natural risks and emergencies, especially those arising from an increase in unmanaged lands, including National Parks

These needs have driven a revised strategic plan and is available to view on the Timber Towns Victoria website

[www.timbertownsvictoria.com.au](http://www.timbertownsvictoria.com.au)



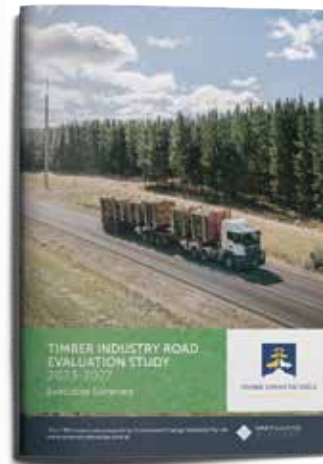
# TIRES

## - Timber Industry Road Evaluation Study

The Timber Industry Road Evaluation Study (TIRES) is a 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 and bridge infrastructure.

The TIRES Report 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 full report is available to Timber Towns Victoria members. The executive summary to the report is available at [www.timbertownsvictoria.com.au](http://www.timbertownsvictoria.com.au)



# 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.

This year TTV represented twelve 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	North
Baw Baw Shire Council	Colac Otway Shire Council	Glenelg Shire Council	Gannawarra Shire Council
East Gippsland Shire Council	Golden Plains Shire Council	Moynes Shire Council	
Latrobe City Council	Moorabool Shire Council		
Wellington Shire Council	Pyrenees Shire Council		
	Ballarat City Council		



# 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 guests attended and/or made presentations at TTV meetings, including:

- Mark Coleman, Economic development Officer Wellington Shire Council delivered a presentation about the recent International Fire Behaviour and Fuels Conference held in Canberra, Australia.
- Anthony Walsh, Fire Manager, Green Triangle Fire Alliance spoke to members on the technology advancements in fire detection systems and firefighting equipment.
- Jason Ross, Publisher for Wood Central (online timber focused news website) spoke to members about the work that he does for the online timber news site.

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.

Timber Towns Victoria encourages members to actively participate and provide feedback / comments to documents such as the creation of government submissions, the periodic reviews of the Strategic Plan the adoptions and implementation of a Timber Encouragement Policy for their Council.

Members have access to a member only area of the associations website where sensitive documents can be viewed with a members log in. The TTV website is: [www.timbertownsvictoria.com.au](http://www.timbertownsvictoria.com.au)

Timber Towns Victoria offers presentations on TTV to member councils on request where there is a desire to gain a broad overview on TTV functions and current activities.

In February 2024, Timber Towns President Cr Karen Stephens gave a presentation to Corangamite Shire Council providing an overview of TTV and offering any support regarding the establishment of new timber plantations within their shire.

TTV is a voice for the members to be heard on current timber industry related issues that are affecting them. TTV listens to what is happening on the ground from our members, and advocate to the State and Federal Governments on behalf of our members for their best interest and desired outcomes.





# Treasurer's Report

TIMBER TOWNS ASSOCIATION INC.

STATEMENT OF INCOME & EXPENDITURE  
FOR THE PERIOD  
1ST JULY 2023 TO 30TH JUNE 2024



## CASH BOOK BALANCE AT 1ST JULY 2023

**\$1,687.16**

### ADD RECEIPTS

ATO BAS Refund	1,232.00	
Transfer from Sandhurst Select 90 Fund	13,200.00	
Subscriptions	47,500.00	
GST Collected	4,750.00	<b>66,682.00</b>
	-----	-----
		<b>\$68,369.16</b>

### LESS PAYMENTS

GST Paid	2,957.88	
Bank Fees	7.45	
ATO BAS Payments	1,476.00	
Printing & Stationery	2,090.91	
Postage	32.76	
Audit & Accounting	4,550.00	
Website Costs	471.59	
Secretarial Fees	19,614.49	
Travel & Accommodation	1,177.27	
Consumer Affairs Lodgement	63.60	
Conference & Meeting Costs	1,692.20	
Consultancy Fees	1,400.00	<b>35,534.15</b>
	-----	-----
		<b>\$32,835.01</b>

## CASH BOOK BALANCE AT 30TH JUNE 2024

**\$32,835.01**

Transaction Account Bank Statement Balance at 30th June 2024	32,193.23	
Credit Card Account Bank Statement Balance at 30th June 2024	641.78	<b>\$32,835.01</b>

## BANK STATEMENT AS CASH BOOK AT 30TH JUNE 2024

**\$32,835.01**

**NOTES  
FORMING PART OF THE  
STATEMENT OF INCOME & EXPENDITURE  
FOR THE PERIOD 1ST JULY 2023 TO 30TH JUNE 2024**

**SUBSCRIPTIONS**

Wellington Shire	2,750.00
Moyne Shire Council	2,750.00
Ballarat City Council	5,500.00
Golden Plains	2,750.00
Baw Baw Shire	2,750.00
Latrobe City Council	2,750.00
East Gippsland Shire Council	5,500.00
Glenelg Shire	5,500.00
Colac Otway Shire	5,500.00
Moorabool Shire	5,500.00
Gannawarra Shire	5,500.00
Pyrenees Shire	5,500.00

**TOTAL**

**\$52,250.00**  
=====

**STATEMENT OF INCOME & EXPENDITURE  
SANDHURST SELECT MORTGAGE FUND  
FOR THE PERIOD 1ST JULY 2023 TO 30TH JUNE 2024**

**SANDHURST ACCOUNT BALANCE AT 1ST JULY 2023**

**\$112,764.66**

**ADD RECEIPTS**

Interest Received	5,176.89	<b>5,176.89</b>
-------------------	----------	-----------------

-----  
**117,941.55**

**LESS PAYMENTS**

Timber Towns Business Transaction Account	13,200.00	<b>13,200.00</b>
---	-----------	------------------

**SANDHURST ACCOUNT BALANCE AT 30TH JUNE 2024**

**\$104,741.55**  
=====

I recommend Timber Towns Victoria members receive this report.

**Cr Tom Sullivan**

**Treasurer**

Timber Towns Victoria

# Timber Towns Victoria Presidents

<b>START</b>	<b>FINISH</b>	<b>NAME</b>	<b>SHIRE</b>
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

ABN: 13 358 698 037

PO Box 152, Portland Vic 3305

0428 891 728

[secretary@timbertownsvictoria.com.au](mailto:secretary@timbertownsvictoria.com.au)

[www.timbertownsvictoria.com.au](http://www.timbertownsvictoria.com.au)

