



TIMBER TOWNS VICTORIA

A Local Government Association

### **Submission: Code of Practice for Timber Production**

Timber Towns Victoria (TTV) is an incorporated Victorian 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.

TTV is an effective advocacy body that represents many towns and cities across Victoria. Our effectiveness is based on being a peak organisation and acting as a voice for these communities advocating to both the Federal and Victorian State Government on policy and legislation that impacts the timber industry.

The 2021 proposed variation of the Code of Practice for Timber Production is welcomed by Timber Towns Victoria and represents a good start to amending the primary regulatory document relevant to timber harvesting in Victoria. This amendment needs to address all issues within the Code to protect and grow jobs in regional communities from future disruption, employee stand downs and a diminishing wood supply.

Victoria's forest and wood products manufacturing industry; a vital and dynamic part of local economies in regional Victoria; is Australia's largest and employs thousands of Victorians across the state.

The Victorian economy benefited from more than \$7 billion by contributions from the timber industry in the last financial year, that provides around 21,000 jobs in Victoria, mainly in rural and regional areas.

Timber workers in regional Victorian local community areas are filled with a great sense of pride to be a part of a sustainable industry that supplies many wood fibre products used by Victorians every day. The changes to the Code need to create certainty that the industry has a strong future.

Victorian communities such as Orbost are being negatively impacted due to the lack of timber supply. The flow on effect is significant. Lack of supply translates into idle mills and job losses. Communities are struggling following the Gippsland fires, Covid19 and without Government intervention to address these issues, greater hardship will be felt.

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Timber Towns Victoria supports the need for consultation and engagement with the Victorian timber industry including forest managers, sawmilling and paper manufacturing representatives, timber community representatives and our industry representatives on the changes to the Code of Practice for Timber Production, and the need to make changes to the Code accordingly, as per the industry recommendations to help protect jobs and minimise disruptions to contractors, sawmills, manufacturers through to Victorian Consumers.

A concise Code of Practice with clear and enforceable guidelines ensuring effective forestry strategies that are environmentally appropriate, socially beneficial, and economically viable is what we want. Changes to the code need to be clear and focus on science and evidence, not be reactive to secular interests which can be counterproductive to the industry.

Timber Towns Victoria is asking the Victorian Government to undertake a comprehensive review of the code by December 2023, to ensure the timber industry can operate safely, with policy, certainty, and creating confidence to invest in a sustainable timber industry.

Yours sincerely

CR KAREN STEPHENS  
President

