

**Rimstone Co-operative Ltd,
Minutes of the 2018 AGM**

Friday 14 September, 8pm, Flat 3 / 18 Fernhurst Grove, Kew.

Note: these minutes draft until ratified at the 2019 AGM

1. **Meeting opened** by Chairman, Darryl Pierce, at 20.10

Present: Darryl Pierce, Nicholas White, Rhonwen Pierce, Rob Brain, Susan White, Miles Pierce, Roy Furness, Margaret James, Daryl Carr, Thomas Maggs, Peter Robertson, Gerhard Noss, G Rhys Maddern-Wellington, Peter Stewart, Bronwyn Carter, Mara Silins, Abhijeet Anand, Lauren Hayes.

A visitor was present who did not sign the register.

Mark Tregellas was on speakerphone from Mallacoota.

Apologies: Brian Finlayson, John Webb, Peter & Margot Matthews, Colin Moloney, Jim Whittington, Greg Leeder, Gary Coleman, Nigel Cooke.

Rhys Maddern-Wellington raised a point of order regarding the Co-operative's Rules in which the version on the website does not match with the rules on the Consumer Affairs Website. Miles Pierce pointed out that Co-operatives in Victoria were now administered under the Co-operatives National Law. Unfortunately the Rimstone website has not been updated and needs doing. The Directors' will look into sorting this out whether the "website" rules were registered with the Consumer Affairs Victoria.

2. Minutes of AGM 2017

These were available on the web site (www.rimstone.org.au) for some months. These were handed out at the meeting. (Attached)

Business Arising from the minutes

Rhys Maddern-Wellington raised the question that there is a missing item, (Homeleigh property) from the 2017 Financial Statements. This was noted to be looked at with the 2018 Financial Statements. These were passed at the 2017 AGM.

Motion: That the 2017 AGM Minutes be accepted

Moved: Miles Pierce Seconded: Margaret James Carried

3. Treasurer's Report (Nigel Cooke)

This was tabled (attached) with the audited accounts (Audited accounts are available to members upon request).

Income

Subscription income this year increased by approximately 30% from last year. Of 92 active members, 76 paid subs and several members brought their arrears up to date. The significant rise in subs is due to the amount of arrears that were brought up to date and the number of new members since last year. However, there is still \$1,350 in unpaid annual subs. This is less than the amount from last year with \$750 added for current members not paying for last year.

Accommodation income decreased by 12% from last year. Large groups staying at Homeleigh, such as La Trobe University and Defence, continue to keep accommodation income high.

Interest earned on our cash holding decreased to \$105 from \$138 last year.

The Financial Statement shows a 42% increase in income this year. The majority of that increase is due to the amount donated for the purchase of M3 Shades of Death.

The lease on the Scrubby Creek property contributed \$5,424 towards income.

Expenditure

Expenditure decreased by 30% on last year. The main contributor of the decrease was maintenance of Homeleigh. The large expenses in materials cost of last year (lounge room project and cladding materials) was not present this year. Accounting fees were more at \$1,595 compared with \$1,320 last year. Gas, water and electricity were at a similar level to last year. Insurance cost on the three properties and liability insurance was much higher than that of last year that only covered two properties and no liability cover, an increase from \$3,166 to \$5,317.

Liabilities

The balance sheet shows a liability carried forward of \$20,000, this being the loan provided by the Australian Speleological Federation for the purchase of the M3 Shades of Death entrance property. The agreement with the ASF is to pay back the loan at a rate of \$10,000 per year. The first repayment was made in June this year.

Result

The Profit and Loss Statement shows a net profit of \$25,312 for this year. From the balance sheet, total equity is significantly higher than last year due to the increase in the bank balance and decrease in liabilities. Projections

Restoration work continues at Homeleigh and will absorb the significant proportion of the accommodation income in the future. The Scrubby Creek property will absorb part of the agistment income as we meet our obligations to maintain the property as landlords and to provide management and protection for the karst features on the property. The major project of fencing off the Tufa Terraces at the resurgence of Scrubby Creek Cave is nearing completion and will absorb some of the funds. There will also be an increase in the cost of weed control and boundary fence repair.

The Shades of Death property will continue to see a moderate redirection of expenditure towards upgrading the infrastructure in the cave. Major works are continuing on ladders and lighting to improve safety and reduce risks of falls. A decrease in donations is expected during the last two years of the loan repayment period but our cash reserves will largely accommodate for the remaining payments to be made on the loan. However, that will greatly diminish our ability to significantly advance the restoration projects.

Cash Reserves

The directors continue to retain \$10,000 in the high interest account to act as a buffer and contingency fund. All other cash holding, not being used for the normal running of the two properties, will be directed towards Homeleigh restoration, preservation of the karst features on Scrubby Creek, maintenance of the Scrubby Creek property and infrastructure works required at the Shades of Death property.

Audit

LSA Partners completed their review of our accounts for the 2018 financial year and sent the accounts for audit. The audit reports are tabled and available for review at the AGM. Rimstone would like to thank Siew-How Tai of LSA Partners for providing accountant services, through LSA Partners, to Rimstone.

Rimstone audits are no longer required by Corporate Affairs. However, the Directors will continue to have the Rimstone accounts audited on an annual basis to safeguard the interests of members.

Discussion of Treasurers Report

- The issue regarding the missing Homeleigh property was noted as being resolved in the audited statements and is properly listed in the assets.
- A short discussion regarding donations via the ASF Karst Conservation Fund occurred but no motions were taken.
- The M-3 property liability of \$20,000 to ASF (an interest free loan) was discussed. There is \$10,000 in the bank for the May 2019 payment that has been accrued through donations and new memberships. This still leaves sufficient funds for operational matters, however donations have started to slow down. Tom Maggs raised the issue of needing to raise the profile of fundraising. Fundraising has been through traditional channels and only funds specifically tagged to Rimstone projects (Scrubby Creek and M3 purchases) are put towards this debt at the moment.

Motion: That the 2018 Treasurer's Report be accepted

Moved: Margaret James Seconded: Gerhard Noss Carried

Motion: That the 2018 Audited Financial statement be accepted

Moved: Daryl Carr Seconded: Mara Silins Carried

4. Secretary's Report: Tabled and spoken to by Nicholas White

As reported in the Treasurers Report there has been a lot of activity in Rimstone during the last year. Managing 3 properties has meant some changes.

We have changed our insurance cover. The properties are covered by Elders Insurance. This includes Homeleigh; the Scrubby and Shades of Death Cave properties are covered by farm insurance including the fences. Separately, we have Public Liability Insurance through Affinity Insurance Brokers. This covers activities of members and for underground activities. It was thought prudent to cover these risks which other insurers would not give us answers about. Currently we are examining how to install anchors for repeated use in Shades of Death Cave.

Victoria has introduced tough Child Safe legislation. Consequently the Directors have adopted a Child Safe Policy. We do not have members under 18 and thus we do not need as members to have Working with Children checks. The policy requires reporting to the police if you suspect problems. The policy is displayed together with "Child Safe Toolkit" in the foyer at Homeleigh.

A number of new members joined Rimstone Cooperative this year. We welcome them. These were Kristen Wills, Ian Barnard, Stephanie Blake, Peter Guest, Paul Grimmond, Mel Roberts, Nick Andrews, David Cooke and Lauren Hayes.

Geoff Rebecchi, Darren Camp, Graham Shaw, Mary Shaw and Dennis Rebecchi were the previous owners and associates of the Shades of Death Cave who developed and operated Shades of Death Cave. They are providing valuable knowledge of the cave infrastructure and the history of the cave.

5. Maintenance reports (including property, buildings and grounds).Noted

5.1 Homeleigh (building, Property and Grounds) Report 2017-18

Nicholas White (Gary Coleman on holidays).

Two well-attended working bees were held (September 2017, May 2018).

The weatherboard replacement program continued at both working bees and is now complete but they need painting. The caretakers door has now been replaced and is fitted with locks consistent with other door locks. It should be noted the door furniture is required for the premises by regulation as "desirable or Level 2 requirements". Don Brooker undertook this carpentry and fitting work that entailed a further visit to make good the corner surrounds to door. The high windows in the Lounge Room needed re-puttying and during the process the glass broke. This will be replaced in due course.

A number of other repairs and maintenance tasks were done through the year.

- The mower had various jobs done to the platform. The mower has a new motor but at some stage may need replacement
- Water pipes froze which needed plumbing repairs
- Valves were replaced on the Hot Water Service
- A trip timer was installed on the Hot Water Service to avoid problems and costs if the Hot Water Service is left on. It needs to be reset after 21 hours if a longer time is required.

The Homeleigh grounds have been kept in good condition by mowing, cleaning etc. by a few dedicated people.

There are a few residual jobs within Homeleigh but we will be able to switch back to completing the bedroom wall insulation and refurbishment program soon. The inside toilet and shower facility is on hold until the outstanding payments for the Shades of Death property are acquitted. There are left over cement weatherboards that need storing until needed for Bungalow or for Main Building replacement.

Various assessments of the building and grounds condition have been undertaken and will guide future renovation priorities.

With Gary Colman out of action for some of the year with knee problems it was Paul Brooker who supervised and participated at the Working Bees. Daryl Carr did most of the mowing and Rudy Frank keeps the fire sprinkler system operational. Thank you to everyone who has participated in keeping Homeleigh and the surrounds in such good condition.

5.2 Scrubby Creek Property

The tabled Scrubby Creek Property report is attached to this report as Appendix 1.

Rhys Maddern-Wellington expressed serious concern regarding the state of the tufa terraces at Scrubby Creek. This resulted in a robust discussion on the conservation status of the terraces, the management of the Scrubby property. This included a summary of the work he had done over the years.

Motion that the memorandum Rhys sent to the Directors on the management of the tufa terraces be placed on the Rimstone Website.

Moved: Rhys Maddern-Wellington Seconded Tom Maggs Not carried.

The Directors then said they would provide a copy to all members.

5.3 M-3 Shades of Death Property

Daryl Carr as the property manager provided a report which is attached as Appendix 2.

Daryl Carr noted that people were needed to upgrade the infra structure at M3.

Daryl was thanked for the work he has undertaken, especially with limited funds.

6. Homeleigh Booking Officers Report 2017 – 2018

Nicholas White

Homeleigh has seen a decrease in use during the year. There were 44 bookings, occupied for 114 nights by 407 individual users for 1,233 bed nights. Homeleigh was used by the Youth Leaders Group of the East Gippsland Shire for a weekend with Mark Tregellas. The Old-Timers Weekend in March organized by Brian Carter was well attended. The Military (RAAF & Signals) used Homeleigh on 8 occasions with large groups and Latrobe University also had a large Field Course for a week in December that will be repeated yearly. These uses were during the week when we have little use of the premises. Once again they always leave the place extremely tidy and clean. Their use is very much appreciated.

Booking figures may not correspond with actual usage that is reflected in the Treasurer's income figures.

The standard booking system is via email by preference. This works by contacting the Booking Officer preferably through email using Rimstone Bookings accomm@rimstone.org.au

I am supported by Susan White and Nigel Cooke when I am away.

From figures to hand the last seven years are given in the table below.

Year	Number of Bookings	Nights occupied	Number of Individuals	Bed Nights
2011-12	43	106	285	700
2012-13	52	170	571	1,454
2013-14	44	193	409	1,138
2014-15	45	143	491	1,454
2015-16	36	126	338	997
2016-17	49	134	488	1,538
2017-18	44	114	407	1,233

Noted. Margaret James noted that the number of large outside group bookings e.g. Defence services, Latrobe University field course, support the operations of the co-operative.

7. General Business.

- GRMW – Financial Statements: Dealt with in section 5 and not revisited here.
- GRMW – Scrubby Creek Cave & M3 Shades of Death Cave properties. More work needs doing to protect the tufa and regards the Co-operative as negligent in its current operations. The directors present refuted this and pointed out that there was never a time frame specifically put on the fencing of the tufa, that it was continuing and the previous weekend had meant that it had been partially completed. It is hoped that completion will be soon. The property has been virtually destocked at the moment due to the drought.

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- Tom Maggs suggested that it would be desirable to set some goals and develop and publicise a management plan for the property, especially the tufa. The directors agreed to look at this proposal.
- GRMW – Rimstone Rules Discussed in item 3 and not revisited here.
- Everyone was reminded of the next Homeleigh working bee on 10-11 November.

8. Election of Directors.

Nigel Cooke & Gary Coleman, the directors required to stand down, were available for re-election. As no further nominations were received, they were elected unopposed.

A motion to reappoint the auditors for the coming year was moved (William Nutton of WA Nutton & Associates 1/6-8 Gloucester Ave, Berwick VIC 3806).

Moved Miles Pierce **Seconded** Susan White **Carried**

The Directors for the past 12 months were thanked.

Darryl Pierce was thanked for hosting the meeting

Moved: Susan White, Seconded: Gerhard Noss Carried

Meeting closed at 9.35 pm

Attachment 1

Scrubby Creek Property, Slippery Pinch Road, Murrindal 2018

Nicholas White

The property is leased to Doug Reidy who is now into the second year of a 3 x 3 year lease period. Doug is the immediate neighbor to the north with a shared fence. Discussions through the year with Lauren Needham amount to the fact that we will need to fence down to Scrubby Creek between her allotment and ours at some stage. This will mean we lose about 30 acres of rocky ground. Doug Reidy is responsible for weed control on all but the 5 ha surrounding the tufa terraces.

A combined La Trobe botany and geology field course has been held at Buchan on the past 2 years. The students have been identifying plants on the property and in the tufa terraces and down to Scrubby Creek. This ecological assessment will be invaluable in the future. Scrubby Creek has remnant rain forest species near their western most occurrences in the State and a significant area of an endangered grass (wild sorghum; *Sorghum leiocladum*). During the December 2017 field trip the students spent half a day cutting and poisoning the blackberries around the tufa terraces.

Paul Brooker at end of March put in a corner post for the tufa fencing. At the same time he sprayed the blackberries and had a very successful kill. Follow up cutting and further spraying will be necessary. Subsequent to years end a very successful working bee was held to continue with the Tufa Fencing project. This will be completed this September and the

remaining task is to install water trough(s) outside the fenced area with stream directed into and back from the tufa.

East Gippsland is currently experiencing extreme drought. Last October the property was under threat from bush fires. Since January the water flow at the tufa terraces has progressively dropped. Only the two top tufa terraces have water and the balance re-emerges in the last pool or two just above the waterfall. The tufa terraces are effectively dry. This spring is the only water on the property at the present time, the soak filling the top dam in the paddock next to Slippery Pinch Road has been dry since the end of last year. Currently the property is free of stock as there is virtually no grass available on the property. Rhys Maddern-Wellington has brought the matter of stock access to the attention of the Directors indicating that we are remiss in not protecting the tufa terraces from stock access.

As part of an M-3 working bee, the very old gate to Scrubby Creek Cave was taken out and a new lock installed on the existing gate as the old one needed repair and we did not have back-up keys to it. Daryl Carr and Neil Wilson had a trip beyond the sump to assess water levels early in 2018. There was very generous room through the sump.

A Scrubby Creek Cave Access policy is being worked through with VSA.

Attachment 2

M3 Operations 2117/2018 year Daryl Carr M3 Manager

As per the plans presented in 2017 the focus this year is on a tidy up and restoration of the M3 property.

We have run multiple working bees over the last year, some formal and others as the opportunity has presented. A major working bee was carried out during March 2018, some 20 Rimstone & VSA members attending.

So far we have taken 12 trailer loads of cleared rubbish to the local Buchan tip. Most of the clearing has been from the external M3 fenced area, but the internal cave section has also been cleared of old works material and infill.

As well as cleaning up M3 we also have been restoring the existing handrails starting from the inside end of the rails. This treatment appears to be successful. By the end of 2018 we hope to have completed the handrail treatment and restoration up to the bottom of the last set of stairs.

The problem with the cave entry door jamming shut has been fixed. The cave entrance shed security has been improved and signage re the M3 ownership has been erected.

The first stairs have been treated, the old timber stair treads removed and replaced with a rot proof composite material.

The M3 perimeter fence is progressively being repaired, but no doubt some time in the future we may need to replace this fence.

A donated solar panel and 12v regulator has been installed at M3 for future lighting possibilities. No action is currently underway or planned to install LED lighting in the cave, except for an exit light on the inside of the cave door. On/off switch on the old guides platform wall.

The 240v generator on site is under repair by the fitting of a new voltage output regulator. Once the repair is completed, 240 power will enable further on site work.

In M3 a digital still and video imaging project has commenced. So far some quite stunning images have been made. Perhaps as we progress with the imaging project members may be interested in purchasing prints to help with M3 finances.

So for the next year

- We have received a local donation of roofing iron, now stored up at M3, enough to replace the rusted out sections of the roof. With a few extra sheets all of the roof will be replaced and that is our intention.
- Continue with the site clean up and fencing repairs.
- Finish the handrail restoration.
- Investigate the possible process of limited formation cleaning.
- Start the M3 resurvey
- Continue with the collection of geological and historical documentation of M3 and surrounding caves (the M3 cluster)
- Establish a cavers' training and recreational route in the first main chamber areas.
- Establish a series of Speleological studies and projects, including track marking and feature protection throughout the cave. A preliminary project area map is located at M3.

Thanks to the Rimstone Directors for their advice and supporting actions, and an extra thank you to all who help on our M3 working bees