

## **Rimstone Co-operative Limited**

### **2024 Annual Report**

#### **Chairman – Nadine Muresan**

The year 2023-2024 has seen significant changes within Rimstone. We extend our gratitude to long-standing member Nicholas White, who stepped down as chairman, for his invaluable contributions and dedicated service over the years.

Each of the three properties has undergone various enhancements and maintenance efforts throughout the year. We are pleased to announce that, with additional working bees on the horizon, we aim to sustain and protect these properties as we approach 2025. Notifications regarding working bees will be distributed through newsletters, Facebook, and emails to ensure comprehensive outreach for assistance in maintaining Rimstone.

As detailed below, Homeleigh has successfully completed several projects this year. The external painting of the lower section and balustrades has been finalized, and the internal bathroom has been completed, now featuring a functional toilet, shower, and lighting. We express our appreciation to all individuals who contributed to meeting the project deadline. The refurbishment of Room 8 is nearing completion, with Paul Brooker having done an exemplary job on the painting and wall finishes.

Furthermore, we have invested in the completion of a professionally prepared Essential Safety Measures document, which the directors will diligently review and maintain to ensure the ongoing protection of Homeleigh.

Both the Shades and Scrubby properties have benefited from substantial working bees throughout the year. We extend special thanks to Daryl and his team for their continuous efforts in enhancing the tourist sections of Shades of Death, and to Nigel for his ongoing work on the survey. Rimstone has also procured underground phones from Peter Robertson for use at Scrubby.

Planning for future projects across all areas is progressing well. A wood restock is scheduled for early October, as we have utilized nearly all supplies from the June restock due to a particularly cold winter. A complete renovation of the big bungalow is planned for the December break in preparation for the 2025 conference. The installation of a kitchen range hood is currently under consideration to ensure compliance with health and safety standards, with this project anticipated to commence in mid-February.

As 2025 marks the 50th anniversary of Rimstone, we will be sending out further details in the new year regarding the planned celebrations.

Homeleigh continues to serve multiple groups actively, and we are excited to witness an increase in participation aimed at enhancing this facility. Nigel Cooke's report on new members and revenue resulting from this increased usage is provided below.

We are pleased to report the release of five newsletters over the year, aimed at keeping our members engaged and informed.

**Policies:** The directors have dedicated considerable effort over the past year to establish multiple policies designed to protect Rimstone's assets. The booking policy has been implemented to ensure that larger groups can secure reservations, with a deposit required in advance to safeguard Rimstone's interests. This policy also guarantees accommodation for all members, except during exclusive use bookings, which incur an additional fee.

The new policies regarding access and usage of the Shades of Death and Scrubby Creek properties have been formulated to foster cooperation among diverse groups, ensuring adequate access for visitation and collaborative efforts on cave projects moving forward. They also aim to enhance the preservation of the karst features and historical infrastructure of the caves. Additionally, the introduction of a donation system for the Shades of Death tourist section has been introduced to cover the costs associated with maintaining that area of the cave.

The directors have also been diligently working to formalize a lease for the Scrubby property, ensuring the protection of our members interests moving forward. Although this has been a lengthy process, it will ultimately establish a well defined lease structure for directors and lease holders.

### **Treasurers Report – Nigel Cooke**

Rimstone's financial position continues to be strong, with funds accumulated from previous years still at a high level and income from accommodation holding steady. The 2023/2024 year has been one of slightly increased income and significantly increased expenditure, resulting in a net loss of around \$7,000 for the year. Cash reserves are still high so our outlook for the coming year is at a high level and favourable, with the expectation being that income and expenditure levels will allow our ongoing restoration and maintenance programme to continue.

#### **Income**

Subs collection this year were similar to last year. Of our 114 members, 99 paid their subs and several brought their overdue balances up to date. The balance sheet shows Accounts Receivable to be \$1,382. This is made of overdue subs payments (\$692), some of which have subsequently been paid with this years' subs and unpaid accommodation (\$690).

Accommodation income increased by 12% from last year. This reflects the slightly higher usage by members and other groups this year.

The Scrubby Creek lease contributed about \$6,400 this year and donations accounted for \$125.

Our overall income increased by 8% or about \$2,500 from last year. This was the result of the increase in accommodation income, Scrubby Creek lease and bank interest.

#### **Expenditure**

Accountancy fees were higher due to the increased cost of the audit and increased Xero monthly fees. Insurance continues to go up in cost with all three property insurances increasing significantly again. Depreciation is higher than last year due mostly to the solar system, new ovens and new fridges. Gas costs have stayed the same and electricity has risen slightly. Repairs and maintenance increased significantly for Homeleigh but decreased for both Scrubby Creek and Shades of Death. We have also have a land tax bill of \$975 for the first time this year. All other expenditure was roughly the same as last year.

Overall, expenditure increased by 20% from last year, driven by depreciation, insurance, land tax and Homeleigh maintenance.

### **Liabilities**

The balance sheet shows no liabilities.

### **Projections**

Expenditure should increase dramatically in the coming year, with refurbishment of the large bungalow starting in the near future. The cost of that refurbishment will be drawn from the funds in the high interest account. So, next year the bank balance in that account will be considerably less. Continuing restoration work at Homeleigh will absorb a moderate proportion of the accommodation income.

The Scrubby Creek property will require moderate expenditure as we progress through the renewal of the grazing lease and bring it up to a more formal basis through a solicitor.

The Shades of Death property will continue to see a moderate expenditure in upgrading the infrastructure in the cave and surface maintenance work.

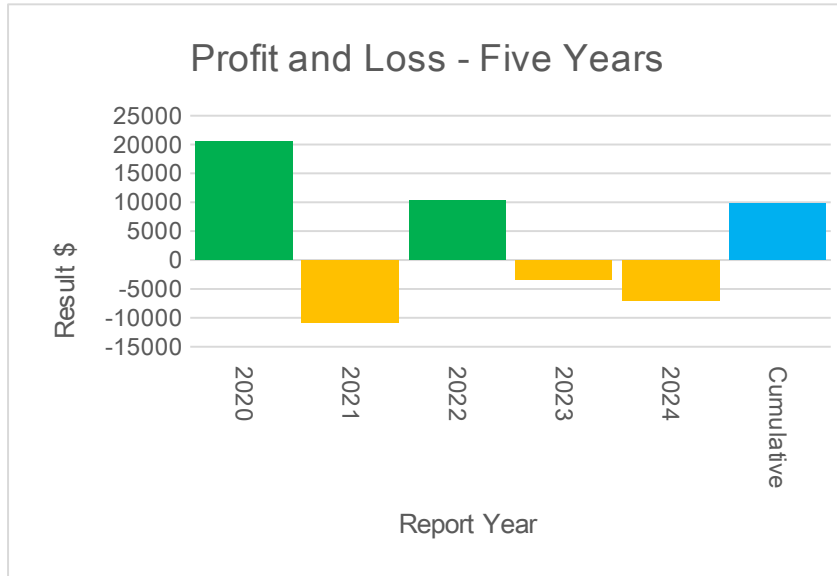
Our high level of cash reserves and expected income result in the recommendation that the accommodation and subscription fees remain at their current levels for next year.

### **Cash Reserves**

At the end of the financial year we had \$46,331 in the bank. This is approximately \$800 more last year. The directors will retain at least \$15,000 in the high interest account to act as a buffer and contingency fund for all properties. All other cash holding, not being used for the normal running of the three properties, will be directed towards Homeleigh restoration and infrastructure works required at the Shades of Death property.

**Result**

The Profit and Loss Statement shows a net loss of \$6,999 as compared with the net loss of \$2,475 of the previous year. To put that into perspective, the 5 year result is shown in the chart below. Over the last five years there has been a net gain of around \$10,000.



**Audit**

LSA Partners completed their review of our accounts for the 2024 financial year and sent the accounts for audit. The audit reports are tabled and available for review at the AGM. Rimstone thanks Siew-How Tai of LSA Partners for providing accountant services.

Rimstone audits are no longer required by Corporate Affairs Victoria. The Directors have continued to have the Rimstone accounts audited on an annual basis to safeguard the interests of members.

Attachments :

1. Profit and Loss
2. Balance Sheet

**Profit and Loss**

Rimstone Cooperative Ltd  
For the year ended 30 June 2024

<b>Account</b>	<b>2024</b>
<b>Trading Income</b>	
Annual Subscriptions	4,500.00
Donations	125.00
Homeleigh - Accommodation	22,630.00
Interest Income	517.13
Scrubby Creek Lease	6,420.00
<b>Total Trading Income</b>	<b>34,192.13</b>
<b>Gross Profit</b>	
	<b>34,192.13</b>
<b>Operating Expenses</b>	
Accounting Fees	3,487.00
Corporate Affairs Victoria	87.50
Depreciation	2,727.00
Functions	65.28
Homeleigh - Accommodation Support	300.00
Homeleigh - Council Fees	240.00
Homeleigh - Council Rates	1,615.76
Homeleigh - Electricity	1,074.63
Homeleigh - Gas	2,558.04
Homeleigh - Maintenance	9,478.23
Homeleigh - Phone	824.34
Homeleigh - Supplies	525.11
Homeleigh - Water Rates	802.16
Insurance - 1465 Gelantipy Road, Murrindal	730.27
Insurance - 15 Genaltipy Road, Buchan	7,131.69
Insurance - 18C Slippery Pinch Road, Murrindal	730.38
Insurance - Liability	3,316.50
Land Tax	975.00
Post Office Box Rental	174.00
Scrubby Creek - Council Rates	1,576.95
Scrubby Creek - Maintenance	1,615.00
Shades of Death - Council Rates	682.77
Shades of Death - Maintenance	346.32
Tools - Maintenance	18.95
Web hosting	108.00
<b>Total Operating Expenses</b>	<b>41,190.88</b>
<b>Net Profit</b>	
	<b>(6,998.75)</b>

## Balance Sheet

Rimstone Cooperative Ltd

As at 30 June 2024

Account	30 June 2024
<b>Assets</b>	
<b>Bank</b>	
Savings Account	35,914.69
Statement Account	10,416.51
<b>Total Bank</b>	<b>46,331.20</b>
<b>Current Assets</b>	
Accounts Receivable	1,382.00
<b>Total Current Assets</b>	<b>1,382.00</b>
<b>Fixed Assets</b>	
Buildings at Replacement Value - Homeleigh	2,002,912.00
Freehold Land - 1465 Gelantipy Rd, Murrindal	35,000.00
Freehold Land - 15 Gelantipy Road, Buchan	40,000.00
Freehold Land - 18C Slippery Pinch Road, Murrindal	255,000.00
Furniture & Fittings at Cost	14,203.00
Less Accumulated Depreciation on Buildings at Replacement Value - Homeleigh	(4,658.00)
Less Accumulated Depreciation on Furniture & Fittings at Cost	(11,732.00)
Less Accumulated Depreciation on Plant & Equipment at Cost	(28,462.00)
Plant & Equipment at Cost	41,376.50
<b>Total Fixed Assets</b>	<b>2,343,639.50</b>
<b>Total Assets</b>	<b>2,391,352.70</b>
<b>Net Assets</b>	
	<b>2,391,352.70</b>
<b>Equity</b>	
Asset Revaluation Reserve	2,093,152.57
Current Year Earnings	(6,998.75)
Forfeited Shares Reserve	14,350.00
Fully Paid Shares	14,400.00
Retained Earnings	276,448.88
<b>Total Equity</b>	<b>2,391,352.70</b>

### **Secretary – Peter Stewart**

The directors held nine meetings via Zoom between 1/7/23 and 30/6/24.

Attendance was good and there were only two occasions when a director was an apology for a meeting.

Since the 2023 AGM the directors have meet once a month.

Minutes are kept on a Google Drive shared by the Directors.

### **Homeleigh – Paul Brooker**

Another year passes and once again Rimstone has seen significant management activity aligned with Homeleigh. While my personal involvement at Homeleigh has been limited due to competing priorities I have managed to continue with, among other things, the renovation of room 8 bedroom. This project turned into a drawn-out process but I'm pleased to say we finally got the room completed...well almost!

Like all the bedrooms, a suitable, practical and durable window furnishing is yet to be installed. This is a particular challenge as there is requirement for whatever is installed in this room to be universal and suitable for all the rooms – we need a low maintenance, safe, consistent and economical window covering – still a work in progress.

Fortunately, there has been a willing band of members and helpers throughout the year continually maintaining and improving Homeleigh. A highlight would be the continuation of painting the outside of the main building...the place certainly shines.

Early in the year we experienced water ingress into the front lounge room and debris deposits on the external verandah because of significant rainfall flooding down the road, compromising the drainage and breaching into Homeleigh. Fortunately, the damage was minimal, with lounge carpet being lifted to dry but no structural damage occurred. Thanks to the concerted efforts of members in residence at the time.

A continuing challenge is compliance with our obligations as a commercial establishment to carry out regular and systematic auditing of the properties Essential Safety Measures. A consultant was engaged to establish a benchmark and provide a checklist of inspection type and frequency. There have been numerous incarnations of this 'checklist' and Rimstone is consistently challenged by having suitably knowledgeable and capable personnel undertake the regular audit. This consultancy came at considerable cost to the cooperative and the value of the investment needs to be assured – its incumbent on the directors/members to ensure the regular audits continue otherwise we will find ourselves in breach of our obligations and wasting hard earned funds. My preference is for an independent qualified third party to carry out the regular audit however this would come at a cost. History shows that Rimstone (despite the best of intentions) does not undertake this mandatory function well!

An ongoing challenge for the cooperative is members and guests meeting obligations when using Homeleigh's facilities. The expectations of the MIC need to be reinforced. The MIC is the members/cooperatives representative during occupation of Homeleigh - to take charge and

ensure members and guests use the facilities respectfully and safely. There are tasks assigned to the MIC, members and guests during their stay that must be undertaken. By following correct processes, the integrity and safety of Homeleigh will be maintained.

Rimstone continues to be injected with new members and corresponding interest and enthusiasm. This has been the case for nearly fifty years. This new energy will ensure the longevity of the cooperative and its facilities. Its important that underpinning the new energy is the fundamental value that whatever Rimstone offers, it must be managed with long-term intentions. Prioritising works and budgets and directing this energy (which is limited and valued) will continue to be a challenge. Enthusiasm must be directed where its needed, to ensure above all else, fiscal responsibility and facility safety and integrity. We must continue to ensure works are appropriate, structurally sound, safe and valued.

I will be standing down as a director at the end of this term. I have been a director of Rimstone for the best part of 25 years (with a short break in there somewhere!). I will continue to contribute and participate when possible and look forward to an injection of new ideas and enthusiasm.

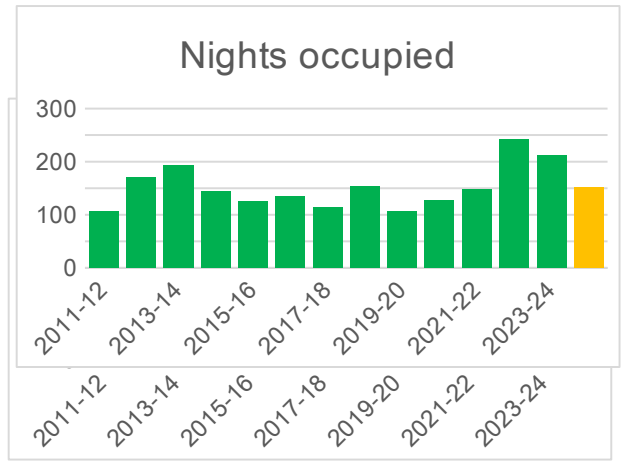
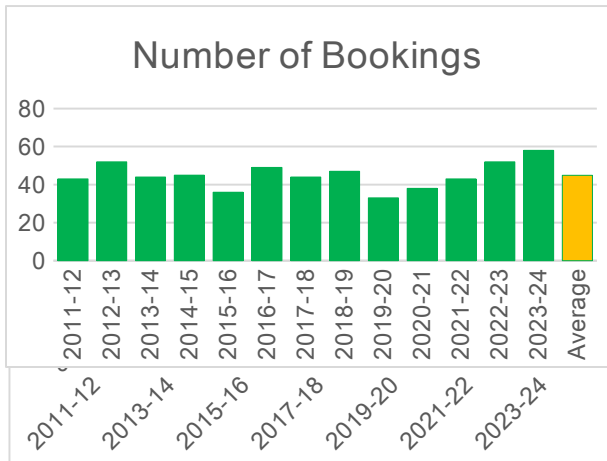


## Booking Officer’s Report – Nigel Cooke

From the statistics shown in the table and the four charts, Homeleigh usage is generally increasing. There have been more individual bookings but over fewer nights during this year compared with the previous year. This would indicate larger group sizes than previously. The number of bed nights is significantly more than previous years. So, Homeleigh is being well utilised at the moment.

The RAAF and La Trobe Uni no longer bring large groups to Buchan, so the majority of the usage has been from VSA, ROC and Scout groups. Even though large external groups have been absent this year, we have maintained a high level of usage. Given the increased caving activity at Buchan recently, it is expected that the upward trend will continue.

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
2018-19	47	153	391	1,318
2019-20	33	106	379	1,460
2020-21	38	127	302	1028
2021-22	43	147	483	1460
2022-23	52	242	369	1326
2023-24	58	212	654	1,862
<b>Average</b>	<b>45</b>	<b>152</b>	<b>428</b>	<b>1305</b>



**M3 Shades of Death - Property Report 2024 - Daryl Carr**

For the year 2023 - 2024 we organized four Working Bees at M3.

The Working Bees were planned to keep the M3 grounds in a reasonable tidy state, continue with the maintenance of the cave pathways and handrails and cave lighting. T

The detail survey of M3 is ongoing and the survey of the Tourist section of M3 will be a good help with future lighting maintenance and planning.

Three rustic wooden bench seats were installed near the cave entry path and a major project to tidy up the large earth bank inside the cave entry shelter was commenced.

The cave lighting generator was relocated in the machinery shed and the exhaust was ported to outside of the shed. The power cable from the generator to the power distribution panel was moved to a new overhead cable run. After using the cave lighting don't forget to fill out the generator log book located in the machinery shed.

Overall, the four Working Bees were well attended and successful, so a great thank you to all workers.

The next Working Bee is planned for 10 – 13 November 2024.

### **Scrubby Creek Cave – Property Update – Nick White & Nadine Muresan**

The property is divided into the fenced area to protect the tufa terrace and grassy slopes above the cave along the downstream creek which is regenerating after the New Years Eve fire in 2019. The grassy slopes have valuable species of grasses and herbs, not present elsewhere on grazed land. I'm not clear on what this means.

There was a successful working bee, which involved clearing blackberries, dead trees, and tidying up the tufa.

A firewood collection operation was carried out by Bo, Nadine, Edmund Muresan, Tom Elms, and Nigel Cooke to replenish wood supplies at Homeleigh. The trees cleared were fully dead and dry.

A new phone line has been installed along the sniff route through the sump, beginning from a dry point on the opposite side and extending to the waterfall. The goal for the upcoming working bee is to extend this line closer to the cave entrance.

A focus of trips into the cave has been training new leaders for the cave. Tom Elms and Nadine Muresan have been added to the Scrubby Creek Cave leaders group.

Dr Sean Bay extended his microbiological sampling beyond the sump in a trip with Josh Van Dyk and Tom Elms.

Cave surveying activities continue, with Bo Muresan focusing on the lower sections and Nadine Muresan working on the upper sections. In the coming year, we are planning photoshoots to document these areas effectively, which will aid in implementing conservation efforts.