## THE GRANITE NEWS



The Granite News - serving the communities of Caveat, Highlands, Hughes Creek, Ruffy, Tarcombe, Terip Terip & Whiteheads Creek.



#### 3rd December 2023 | Volume 17 Issue 41

#### Welcome, Wumindjika & G'day

Kia Ora and Harae Mai from the Land of the Long White Cloud -New Zealand, (again) still here but headed for home on Tuesday.

For those of us who were unable to get up close and personal with the Cherry Tree Windfarm turbines last weekend I've been doing a little research whilst travelling around the North Island and came across the Te Apiti Windfarm, 10 kilometres from Palmerston North on the north side of Manawatu Gorge, that dominates about 1,150 hectares along its ridgeline.

"The wind farm's 55 1.65 megawatt Vestas turbines have a total capacity of 90 megawatts. They generate electricity to meet the annual electricity needs of approximately 45,000 average homes.

Each turbine has a tower measuring 70 metres high and is fitted with 3 blades each 35 metres in length. (This makes them similar in size to the Cherry Tree turbines but less than half the size of those proposed for the southern Strathbogies) The blade rotations per minute can vary according to the wind speed with a maximum speed of 17 revolutions per minute.

Construction of Te Apiti wind farm started in November 2003. Major work was needed to construct 21 kilometres of roads and excavate the turbine foundations. The roads were built to 10 metres wide to carry the width of the 400-tonne crawler crane that was used to install the turbines. After the turbines were erected the roads were re-grassed to 5 metres wide.

Te Apiti began generating electricity in August 2004 and cost \$100 million (NZ) to construct."

From - https://www.windenergy.org.nz/te-apiti-wind-farm

Fortunately readers, Randal from Ruffy managed to visit Cherry Tree Windfarm last weekend (it certainly wasn't very well publicised as this little epistle didn't receive any information) and has supplied a personal review of the excursion. See p.3 for this, along with photos of the Te Apiti turbines too. Apologies for not having any human perspective in those photos, it was raining and Peter was reluctant to get out of the car to be the mannequin. However, the sign was approx. 3m x 1.5m in size.

Please read on for another interesting issue, Pauline And Kenny? Was hoping to win \$100 of his favourite trees. Feedback? <u>editor@tgn.org.au</u> or to subscribe on-line go to <u>www.highlands.org.au</u>

The Granite News is an open but moderated community forum. Readers are encouraged to contribute articles and we also encourage you to air your views on things that interest or concern you within our community. We certainly welcome feedback from you, positive or otherwise on anything that is published in The Granite News

"Happiness starts with a wet nose and ends with a tail."

Anon



Sign seen in the Bruny Island Cheese Company's shop.

Month	Highlands	Ruffy	Terip
Nov.	84.3	99	71
	mm	mm	mm
2023	780.7	733.5	837.4
Total	mm	mm	mm
Rainy Days	8 days	6 days	9 days

	NB: Fully vaccinated attendees are appreciated at all events.	What's On - December 2023 & January 2024
Details? see p.7	Friday 8th Dec. @ 6.30	HIGHLANDS COMMUNITY END of YEAR BBQ @ Highlands Community Hall
	Sun 10th Dec.	LAST GRANITE NEWS for 2023 - Send any items to the Editor - ASAP or even NOW!
Details? See p.8	Mon. 11th Dec. @ 1pm	RUFFY VEGGIE CLUB TOUR to Edible Forest in Dixon's Creek - bookings a must!
	Tues. 12th Dec. @ 12.30	HIGHLANDS SPINNING CLUB - Christmas Party @ Country Club Hotel, Yea Partners or friends are welcome. Would attendees PLEASE ring Andrea 0417 369 225 as soon as possible so we know how many to book for. Meals to be paid for individually
	Thursday 28th Dec. @ 5.30	SECRET MEN'S BUSINESS @ Caveat Church All people in the district are welcome, pink note (\$5) donation towards BBQ, BYO & chat.
Novel growt caturage	Friday 29th Dec. 6-8pm	HIGHLANDS BOOK CLUB@ Highlands Community HallAll welcome, BYO plate to share & preferred beverage. Gold coin donation. Sam Neill's book of memoirs - Did I ever tell your this? is up for discussion.Robyn 0409 528235
	Friday 12th Jan. @ 6.30pm	DRINKS on the DECK @ Highlands Community Hall Starts @ 6.30pm, bring food to share and catch up with friends old and new. All welcome, especially new faces. Gold coin donation to cover power. Contact Paula 0419 551882
	Every Second Wednesday 10-30-12.30	MURRINDINDI MOBILE LIBRARY SERVICE@ Highlands Community HallThe Mobile Library visits the TGN area, based at the Highlands Hall every fortnight. Whynot pop in?Forthcoming dates are 6th & 20th December.
	1st & 3rd Tuesdays 10-12 and 1-3	TABLELANDS KIDS' PLAY GROUP@ TCC, 27 Nolans Rd, RuffyAll ages welcome - Nature play - Playground - Toys - Friends - 6th Dec & 20th Dec.DIGITAL & ON-LINE LEARNING@ TCC, 27 Nolans Rd, Ruffy6th & 20th Dec. Dec.Enquiries? Bob - 0480 348788
	2nd & 4th Sundays	ST DAVID'S UNITING CHURCH - TERIP RUFFY 2nd Sunday 11.15am Pastor Scott Leslie / 4th Sunday 11am Morning tea & Study group
	Every Tues. & Fri. 8.45-9.45	CUSTOM YOGA is BACK with Ingridat the Tablelands Community Centre\$20 per hour long class BYO mat and blanketEnquiries? Ingrid ingstar.7@gmail.com

**DON'T FORGET** - TGN will be taking its usual summer break of 4 weeks - **NEXT WEEK** being the last issue for 2023, before recommencing on **January 14th 2024**. So if you have any news, ads, diary dates, etc that you need to let TGN readers know about for early next year best email them ASAP for inclusion in the last issue for 2023!

#### Letter to the Editor

#### Fera Community Meeting at Cherry Tree Wind Farm - 25 November 2023

#### Dear Editor.

With good weather the night before (27ml) and more rain expected we took a coat. The drive through Whiteheads Creek showed the sheer neglect with waterways choked with flowering blackberries. Yet another example of the failure of the Department and the decline in land management in recent decades. The optimum time for spraying blackberries in Ruffy is December, with the overwhelming number of people spraying late. Whiteheads Creek should be spraying now in November, although some spraying, with Grazon, could have started in October. A thirty-minute drive from or around Ruffy in any direction shows the scale of the problem. There is no such thing as a good or bad blackberry growing season, just good or bad management and spraying once every few years just allows a seed bank to get established. A common practice these days.

This visit to the Cherry Tree wind farm was advertised at the previous May and August meetings (held by FERA). We were very fortunate to be driven up to the turbines by Cesare Fera and ended up having a 45-minute tour rather than the 15 minutes that most people got. A moderate northerly wind was blowing and we wondered how much louder it would be on the southern side of the turbines. Cesare offered to drive us to the south side and we stopped and got out at multiple distances from the turbines to gauge the noise level. Surprisingly a plane on the Melbourne to Sydney route, probably at 25 to 30,000 feet flew over, and it was louder than the wind turbines. Low cloud prevented us from seeing the plane, but we all heard it.

A group of approx. 35 people attended the day and I was a little surprised more people did not take the opportunity to attend. Whether you are for or against wind farms, this was an opportunity to get up close and be better informed.

The day was topped off by spraying some St John's Wort on the side of the road in Caveat on the way home. **Randal Threlfall, Ruffy.** 





Te Apiti Windfarm -Manawatu, New Zealand

Both photos take from the Saddle Road that slices between the turbines.



On the South side of Cherry Tree Wind Farm.

The mast is a permanent wind monitoring station.

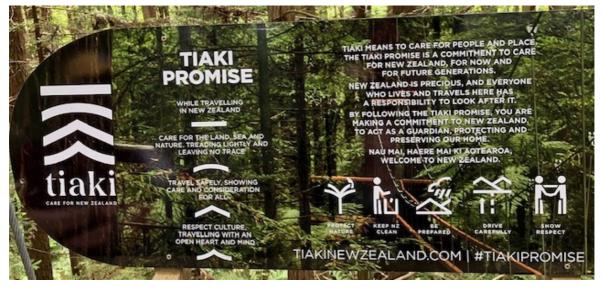
#### **TREES - THE LUNGS OF THE WORLD**

There's a lot of clear felling happens in New Zealand if the bare slopes of the North Island are any indication. Forestry is the country's third largest export after dairying and meat and most of what is harvested, unlike in Australia, is plantation pine (Pinus Radiata).

Some of the cleared slopes look very steep and one wonders how much of an impact erosion is going to make before the newly planted trees stabilise the ground and hold onto its rich top soils.

However, there is a Maori word - **TIAKI** - which might be applicable here. It means to care for people and place, for now and for future generations, so hopefully this perspective is being applied to the commercial harvesting of trees throughout New Zealand.

Sadly, it was not a concept taken into consideration by VicForests in their logging of the Mountain Ash forests south of the HCCC area, as well as elsewhere in Victoria (See - A Legacy of Logging https://tinyurl.com/4crv385d) and it appears that there is similar concern over fuel reduction burns slated to occur in the Strathbogie Forest - home of the endangered Southern Greater Glider - see p.5 for further information.



The sign was displayed in amongst some of the tallest trees in the world - a stand of Californian Redwoods that were planted in the Whakarewarewa Forest on the outskirts of Rotorua in 1901. They are huge but still really only babies, at 122 years old, as this species can live for 2,000 years!



#### Letter to the Editor

#### Wrong fire, wrong place

Fire is a tricky thing – at one extreme it consumes everything in its path, at the other it can be a patchy burn and trickle through a forest. Unfortunately, there is no predictable, happy medium - even low intensity cool burns can have devastating effects on forests and wildlife.

The Greater Glider has been known to occur in the Strathbogie Forest for many decades and in recent years government scientists have shown the forest to be a stronghold for the species in Victoria. In August this year, local group Save Our Strathbogie Forest launched legal proceedings against the Victorian Government to stop the fuel reduction burning of up to 2000 ha of important habitat for the endangered Greater Glider, Australia's largest gliding marsupial.

Prior to launching the legal action, we repeatedly asked the government to modify the burns to reduce the risk to the gliders. None of our requests were agreed to.

The Victorian government's assertion that the burns will not have a significant impact on the Greater Glider population in the forest appears to contradict information published by both the Australian and Victorian governments. For example, the Australian Government's Greater Glider Conservation Advice lists fire, particularly too-intense, or too-frequent fuel reduction burning, as having "severe" consequences for the species.

The case in no way attempts to stop all fuel reduction burning as some comments in the media have claimed. In our opinion, burning forest that is known to support a healthy population of a nationally endangered species, when the government itself recognizes that such fire poses a risk to that very species, represents poor forest management. In this case, it's the wrong fire in the wrong place. The Federal Court hearing has been set for late January, 2024. The Statement of Claim and the Defense can be found on our website - https://strathbogiesustainableforests.wordpress.com/

Your tax deductible donation will help us reach our goal. Visit the Chuffed fundraising page https://chuffed.org/project/strathbogieforest-legal-action.

#### Bertram Lobert President, Save Our Strathbogie Forest



Southern Greater Glider, Strathbogie Forest (Image Helen Repacholi)

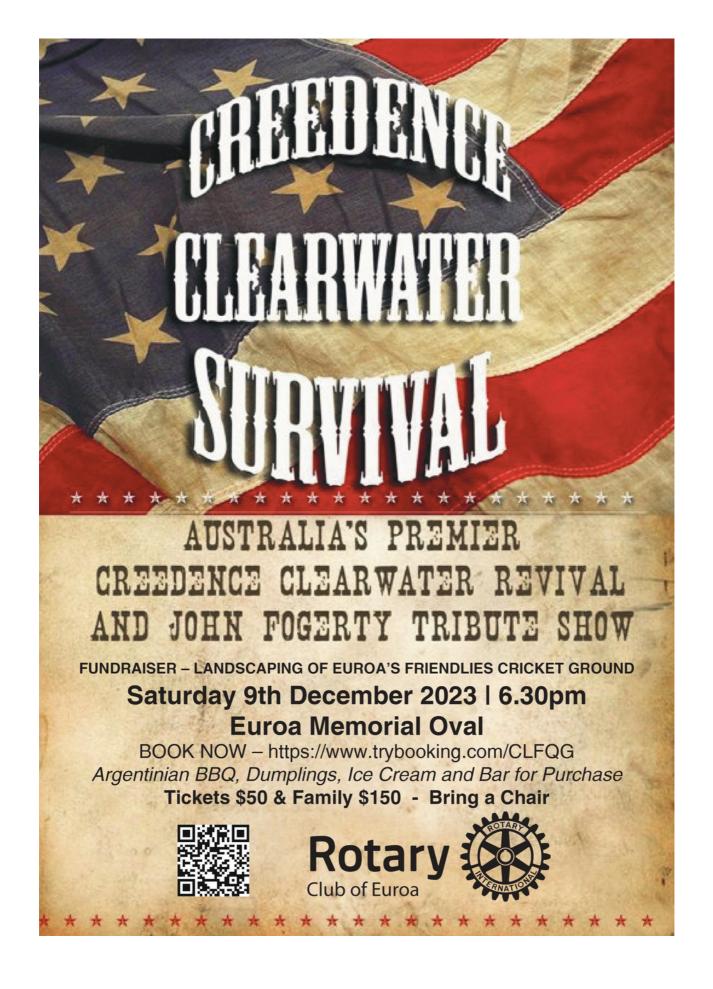
An ancient forest giant killed by a planned burn, Strathbogie Forest



Given FERA's plans for a local windfarm the following may be of interest to HCCC area readers...

VicGrid are asking for input to the Victorian Transmission Plan via an online survey and an interactive mapping tool.

Have your say about the development of Renewable Energy Zones and the Victorian Transmission Plan by<br/>completing the survey and then mark on the map the places in your local area that you feel are important.https://engage.vic.gov.au/victransmissionplanSee p.9 for more information





# You are invited to the Highlands/Caveat

End of Year Family Get Together

### Friday 8th of December at 6.30pm The Highlands/Caveat Community Group

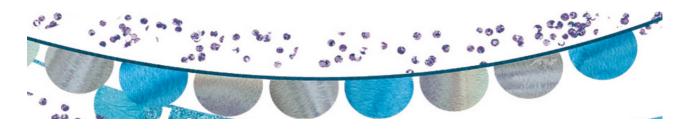
**Highlands Hall** 



BBQ provided BYO drinks, glass, chair, and a salad to share

This is a community break up, so we invite all groups and members to attend

No pets please



#### The Ruffy Veggie Club

is having an end of year outing to visit The Edible Forest in Dixon's Creek(Yarra Valley) for a guided tour on Monday December 11th at 1pm. The Food Forest is a one acre netted garden where everything is planted for a reason be it edible, medicinal, bird attracting, or nitrogen fixing.

The tour is \$15.00 per person (for ten or more) and afternoon tea can be provided for an additional \$12.50 per person.

Bookings for the tour and afternoon tea must be confirmed by December 3rd by contacting Cheryl on 0409 019763.

Car pooling is encouraged and more information about The Food Forest can be found on their website-

www.edible forest.co

Are you interested in adding to the iNatutaliste's environmental knowledge base of the local HCCC area?

If YES then download the App now, follow the instructions for use in TGN 30/7/23, and start recording our unique natural wonders of both fauna and flora. It's an incredibly valuable resource.

#### **Know Your Weeds**

#### Mesquite (Prosopis spp)

#### **State Prohibited Weed**

There are 6 species or sub-species of Mesquite - an invasive and aggressive competitor that excludes other vegetation - recognised in Australia. A small tree or shrub they grow to between 1 - 1.5m tall.

The leaves are bright green and consist of 3 segments, with leaflets 5-12mm long.

Its flowers in summer are yellow, cylinder shaped flower spikes 5-10 cm long found in clusters of 2-5 at the end of the branches. The straw-coloured seed pods are 10-20cm in length and contain approx. 20 hard black seeds.

The stems are thick and woody with spikes on the main stem and on the branches above each leaf stalk. Older bark is rough and newer bark smooth, both are grey-brown or black in colour.

It can be spread by stock, other animals and water and the best time for controlling its spread is from Oct - March.

As a State prohibited weed this is done by DEECA - www.deeca.vic.gov.au For further information re eradication email - info@hccclandcare.net.au

#### **HIGHLANDS BOOK GROUP**

The next meeting of the Highlands Book Group will be at the Highlands Hall on Friday 29th December (in that weird week between Christmas and New Year when we've finished celebrating the festive season and are waiting for the next year to arrive).

So why not come along and enjoy some great company and lively discussion about actor and vigneron, Sam Neill's new book -'Did I ever tell you this?'

#### FOR SALE

Vintage school desk from **Clifton Hill Primary School.** \$80 Karli 0425 794 838











#### Developing the first Victorian Transmission Plan Help us plan Victoria's future reliable, affordable and renewable energy grid.

#### OPEN FOR FEEDBACK - CLOSES 31 JANUARY 2024

#### Overview

Victoria is undergoing a transition to renewable energy.



As our ageing and increasingly unreliable coal-fired power stations retire and are replaced by renewables, our electricity grid needs to evolve. New transmission infrastructure will be critical to moving high volumes of energy from the new areas where it is generated, to homes and businesses where it will be used.

The Victorian Government has established VicGrid to plan future major electricity transmission infrastructure and coordinate the state's Renewable Energy Zones (REZs), the areas with the greatest potential for renewable energy development.

VicGrid is leading reforms to how we plan future transmission and Renewable Energy Zones to ensure that cheaper, more reliable renewable energy can be delivered to homes and businesses across the state.

As part of the reforms, VicGrid will develop the first statewide Victorian Transmission Plan by mid-2025.

An important step in building the Victorian Transmission Plan is to identify 'Renewable Energy Zone Priority Areas'. These are geographical areas that could be appropriate for energy generation, storage and transmission. Once we know the Priority Areas for renewable energy generation we will work with communities to investigate where possible transmission could go.

#### Community needs to be at the heart of our planning process.

As we start, VicGrid is asking Victorians, and particularly those living in regional communities, to share your views towards renewable energy and transmission development, as well as your local knowledge about your region and values important to you.

#### How to participate

Learn more in the helpful documents section (on Website) or RSVP to attend a webinar on 30 November

Complete the Renewable Energy Planning Survey (on website) so we can understand more about your views towards renewable energy and transmission development.

Use the interactive map to show us important land uses in your area. https://engage.vic.gov.au/project/victransmissionplan/survey/4576#sub-nav

Join us in March 2024 at a workshop or drop-in near you to discuss what we have heard. Register your interest to attend - see Website.

The survey and interactive map will close at 12.01am on Wednesday 31 January 2024. You will still be able to engage with us and provide input at workshops and drop-ins in March 2024.

**Note:** Consultation is already underway in some parts of Victoria for some critical near-term transmission projects. This Land Assessment is statewide and will be an input to the first Victorian Transmission Plan. Where possible, information recently gathered by VicGrid from community, landholders and Traditional Owners for Offshore Wind transmission in Gippsland and Portland will be reflected in this assessment.

#### MURRINDINDI SHIRE COUNCIL <mark>NEWS</mark>

#### **PREPARING FOR FIRE SEASON**

Prepare your property and make use of Council's free green waste service until 31 December. You can dispose of domestic quantities of grass clippings, leaves, garden trimming and branches at Council's Resource Recovery Centres.

For more information on green waste disposal and RRC opening times, visit our website and search 'green waste' or call us.

Council's Fire Prevention Roadside Slashing Program is also underway, running until the end of December with further slashing arranged as required throughout summer.

For more information about our Roadside Slashing Program, visit our website and search 'bushfire prevention'.

#### **KEEP INFORMED DURING AN EMERGENCY**

VicEmergency is the key source for all emergency warnings and incident information in Victoria. Visit VicEmergency here:

- Website: emergency.vic.gov.au
- VicEmergency app: mobile version
- VicEmergency hotline: Call 1800 226 226
- Facebook: follow 'VicEmergency' for statewide information and 'VicEmergency – Hume' for region specific information.

To learn more about other ways to get information during an emergency, visit the CFA website at cfa.vic.gov.au/warnings

#### **FIRE DANGER PERIOD DECLARED**

The CFA declared Fire Danger Period is now in force in Murrindindi Shire.

Make sure you know what you can and can't do during the Fire Danger Period by visiting the CFA website at cfa.vic.gov.au/can

#### **GRANTS AND SPONSORSHIPS PROGRAM**

Are you interested in applying for a grant through Council's Grants and Sponsorships Program? Grant applications for round 3 close 31 January 2024.

Call the Grants team on 5772 0333 or visit our website at murrindindi.vic.gov.au/grants for more information.

#### **HOLIDAY PERIOD CLOSURES 2023/24**

#### LIBRARIES AND CUSTOMER SERVICE (INCLUDING THE MOBILE LIBRARY), MATERNAL AND CHILD HEALTH CENTRES:

- Friday 22 December: 9.00 am 3.00 pm
- Saturday 23 December Monday 1 January: CLOSED
- Tuesday 2 January: Usual hours resume

#### **SWIMMING POOLS**

Monday 25 December: CLOSED

Visit murrindindi.vic.gov.au/pools for opening hours.

#### **KERBSIDE WASTE COLLECTION**

There is no kerbside bin collection on Monday 25 December (Christmas Day) or Monday 1 January (New Years Day).

Services due for collection during the two weeks commencing 25 December and 1 January will be collected a day later than usual, including those usually collected on a Friday, which will be collected on a Saturday.

From Monday 8 January, kerbside collections will resume as usual.

For more information about the holiday season collection schedule, visit murrindindi.vic.gov.au/holidayclosures

#### **RESOURCE RECOVERY CENTRES**

Resource Recovery Centres (RRCs) are closed on Christmas, Boxing, and New Year's Day.

In addition to these closures, they are closed on days of Total Fire Ban.

#### **EMERGENCY CONTACT DETAILS**

- Maternal and Child Health Line: 13 22 29
- Poisons Information Line (24 hours): 13 11 26
- Community Safety or Infrastructure Services
  after hours emergency (stock on roads, dog attacks etc): 5772 0333.

#### **STAY INFORMED**

To stay up to date with the latest Council news, visit murrindindi.vic.gov.au/news or follow us on Facebook.

#### GET IN TOUCH

customer@murrindindi.vic.gov.au murrindindi.vic.gov.au/request 5772 0333







The Granite News is usually created on the lands of the Taungurung clans - First people of the Rivers and Mountains.

We thank the Taungurung ancestors and elders who, for millennia, have cared for this country on which we now live, work, play and grow.

May the current generations of Taungurung, HCCC residents & landowners continue this important custodianship into the future.