THE GRANITE NEWS



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



5th March 2023 | Volume 17 Issue 8

Welcome, Wumindjika & G'day

We are now officially in autumn and in anticipation of some balmy, stable weather the social activities for the HCCC area are proliferating considerably. So much so that this week's TGN is a record 10 pages!

We also have a couple of articles from regular correspondents and this week a brand new, semi-regular column entitled - Know your Weeds! - is commencing.

Many thanks once again to all those readers who send in notices and fliers it really makes TGN a relevant community newsletter, however a reminder please that Canva (the program that TGN is now created in) doesn't accept items in .pdf format so please reformat to either .jpg or .png before emailing anything for inclusion. Thanks for this.

Read on for another excellent issue, Pauline
And Kenny? Was thanking Sandy Mc Kenzie for all his GREAT books

Know Your Weeds

Let's start this series with a weed that we all know well and need to dispose of, due to its abundant growth over the last 6 months.

Blackberry - Rubus Fruiticosus

Anyone who lives in rural areas will be familiar with this noxious weed introduced by European settlers in the mid 1800s and the problems that it can cause. Not only does it invade natural watercourses, as well as agricultural land, it inhibits natural regeneration and reduces agricultural productivity.

It is therefore a Weed of National Significance.

It has white to pink flowers from December to February and produces fruit from December to March which are initially green but turn red to black upon ripening.



Although the Blackberry might be visually confused with the native raspberry, its invasive nature is its hallmark and distribution of its seeds can be done by by either water or by birds and/or animals eating the seed or carrying it away from the parent plant.

Optimum time to either spray or mechanically remove this noxious weed is between December and May. Don't forget that HCCC has subsidies available for such eradication - info@hccclandcare.net.au

Vale

Neil Nagle (1933 - 2023) A valued member of the Highlands community for over 40 years. Condolences to Margaret and family. Feedback? editor@tgn.org.au or to subscribe on-line go to www.highlands.org.au

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

"A library outranks any other thing a community can do to benefit its people. It is a never failing spring in the desert."

Andrew Carnegie (1835-1919) Industrialist & Philanthropist

Here's a tip:
Ring your doorbell on your way to bed at night.
This will clear the dogs off your bed long enough for you to get in and get comfortable.

Month	Highlands	Ruffy	Terip
Feb.	18 mm	10.5 mm	15.2 mm
2023 Total	27.2 mm	27.5 mm	82.8 mm
Rainy Days	4 days	2 days	4 days

	NB: Fully vaccinated attendees are appreciated at all events.	What's On - March 2023	
NB Date change again!	Tuesday 7th March @ 11am	HIGHLANDS SPINNING CLUB The Highlands Spinning Club will get together in 2023 at the same place - 450 Caveat Dropmore Rd, the same time 11am and with the same good company! BYO lunch and great tea & coffee will be provided. Enquiries? Jan 5790 4361	
	Friday 10th March @ 6.30	DRINKS on the DECK @ Highlands Community Hall Starts at 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	
Details? See p.8	Sunday 12th March @ 4pm	THE HAIRY LASSOS at their only RUFFY GIG @ TCC, Ruffy Free event. BYO Food & drinks. All Welcome. Enquiries? Mel 0404 833388	
	Saturday 18th March @ 10-12	HIGHLANDS BLACK MARKET @ 94 Old Highlands Rd Bring along your excess produce, buy local and learn from each other. Enquiries? Clare 0428 969366	
Details? See p.7	Saturday 18th March 9.30-3	STRATHBOGIE RANGES CONSERVATION NETWORK WALK back again in 2023 Do you like a challenge? Like exploring our wonderful local area? This walk is for YOU!	
Details? See p.6	Saturday 25th March @ 4pm	PHIL PARA - LIVE in CONCERT!! @ Ruffy Recreation Reserve BYO picnic, \$20 or \$10 concession - ruffartztickets@gmail.com OR 0407 017090	
	Sunday 26th March @ 10am	HIGHLANDS RAMBLERS @ Highlands Hall Everyone is welcome to come rambling and discover our local district. Enquiries? Andrew 0437 249038 or Robyn 0409 528235	
	Thursday 30th March 5.30pm	SECRET MEN'S BUSINESS @ Caveat Church All people in the district are welcome, pink note (\$5) donation towards BBQ, BYO & chat	
Details? See p.3	Saturday 1st April @ noon	HCCC APRIL FOOL'S PICNIC @ Ruffy Recreation Reserve Everyone is invited to a day of fun, food and frivolity. RSVP by 27th March for catering	
	Every Second Wednesday 10-30-12.30	MURRINDINDI MOBILE LIBRARY SERVICE at Highlands Community Hall The Mobile Library visits the TGN area, based at the Highlands Hall every fortnight. Why not pop in? Forthcoming dates are March 8th & 22nd.	
	Every Monday @ 10am	RUFFY QI GONG has recommenced - EVERY Monday - at 10.00am.	
	Every Tuesday 8.30 - 9.30 am	CUSTOM YOGA is BACK with Ingrid at the Tablelands Community Centre \$20 per class BYO mat and blanket Enquiries? Ingrid ingstar.7@gmail.com	



Come along and enjoy a day of fun, food and frivolity

@Ruffy Recreation reserve

Saturday April 1st at noon.

All welcome



HCCC will provide a lamb spit roast, bread and salads, with vegetarian, vegan & gluten free options available.

Limited drinks will be supplied, welcome to BYO.

including well behaved pets.

Please bring a cake, fruit or dessert to share and chairs or picnic rug.

We are planning the following free activities for all:

- Drone spraying demo & training with Drone Spraying Australia
- Junior science water bug discovery
- Uncommon marsupials conservation
- Uncommon weeds identification
- Species Recovery Banksia marginata
- Bush art activity (all ages)
- Beekeeping





RSVP by 27th March for catering purposes phone:

Jenny Webb 0408 969 236 Janet Hagen 0458 904 268 Sue van Buuren 0411 010 379 or email neil@hccclandcare.net.au



The Soil Carbon Project - by Vanessa Malandrin (Part #1)

For one year I have been postponing writing a proper article on this project, and that's mainly for two reasons: I find the whole topic daunting and I am a perfectionist. What a bad combination! Now, let's see if I can overcome these obstacles, bit by bit.

So, let's start from the beginning. Our project aimed at finding and testing strategies to increase carbon levels in soils, considering soils in the Hughes Creek Catchment are generally acidic.

A bit of background: soil acidity

Throughout the Hughes Creek and the whole Goulburn Broken Catchment, soils are generally acidic, with pH values lower than 4.8 (CaCl2), or 5.5 (water), depending on how pH is measured. Now, I can hear you asking, should we worry about soil acidity at all?

Well, it depends. If soil becomes too acidic, this may:

- decrease the availability of major and essential plant nutrients, like N, P, K (but also sulphur, calcium, and manganese) and some trace elements, like molybdenum.
- increase the availability, and therefore the impact, of toxic elements like aluminum.
- affect essential soil biological functions, like nitrogen fixation.
- · decrease plant production in general and water use.
- make soil more vulnerable to structure decline, and therefore to erosion.

This doesn't sound too good, and it explains why acidic soils may not be able to give their best in supporting agricultural activities and biodiversity. In fact, low pH values have been linked to sub-optimal soil health, limited plant growth and lower levels of carbon stored in the soil.

So, what causes soil acidity?

On one hand, soil acidity occurs naturally and varies according to:

- Landscape geology. Think of those lovely boulders that we can find around the Highlands and the Tablelands. Certain parent materials (the geologic material from which soil horizons form), like granites, can naturally contribute to soil acidification. In fact, granites have a lot of free quartz (which produces silicic acid on weathering), and are relatively low in carbonate minerals, that would increase the buffering capacity.
- Buffering capacity: a measure of a soil's capacity to resist pH change. E.g. soils with a high proportion of clay
 or organic matter are better equipped to resist a decrease in pH.
- Clay mineralogy: soils with a higher clay content tend to have a higher water holding capacity, greater capacity to retain nutrients against leaching, and greater buffering capacity in general.
- Soil texture: clays are generally better buffered than loams, which in turn are better buffered than sands.
 Sandy soils have a hard time neutralizing acidity, while fertile soils rich in humus and minerals have a good buffering capacity.

On the other hand, some agricultural practices can also increase soil acidification:

- · removal of plant and animal products
- · leaching of excess nitrate
- addition of some nitrogen-based fertilisers
- build-up of plant-based organic matter.

That's enough baby steps for today! Now it's time to relax swimming in the lake.

How do we deal with soil acidity? Usually, we apply lime.

Back in November 2022, I have been to a field day addressing subsoil acidity, organised by Strathbogie Tableland Landcare Group at Macsfield Park, in Galls Gap. Their trial paddock was limed three times since 2014 (each time at 1 tonne/acre), with little pH response, particularly at depth. They've used pelletised lime that can be sown into the soil and therefore has more neutralising activity, but it also costs ten times more the conventional lime. In this

way they were able to make some pH impact on the sub-soil, but the qualities required and the costs of doing so made the exercise of marginal impact in real life.

And why do we want to increase soil carbon levels, anyway?

That will be the topic for next week.

Excerpt from SRRCG summary of FERA community information meetings, Saturday 25th February 2023.

FERA, the developer of the proposed Seymour Wind Farm, recently held meetings to inform the community of their plans. There is very strong opposition to this project by the community and the meetings were very rowdy with many people unable to ask questions or to hear the responses from FERA representatives.

The following information was given by FERA at the meetings. It should be made clear that some of these details are commercially sensitive and that FERA had no obligation to make them public.

As of the 12th of January 2023, FERA had apparently signed option agreements with 8 landholders in the area to build wind turbines on their properties if the project proceeds as planned.

The amount of land currently under contract to FERA is enough to build 60 to 70 turbines, with one turbine to approx. 500 to 700 acres.

This is projected from the generator size (6-7.2MW) as larger generators will be more widely spaced. FERA advised it is yet to select turbines given the technology development in this space.

The proposed height of the turbines is between 100m to 150m from ground to the hub with 90m blades, based on preliminary wind studies. FERA noted that it has only installed one test mast (in Sept 22) and it aims to install others in coming months. FERA is also utilising other wind data - possibly from the Elgo turbine. FERA acknowledged its analysis is at a very early stage.

Siting of each turbine is still unknown as this will depend on the results of environmental impact, cultural heritage, and wind studies, as well as access limitations and many other factors. It was noted that FERA committed to consult with neighbouring properties about the location of towers to minimise visual and acoustic impact. This may involve payment of minimum compensation or in kind such as landscaping to mitigate the visual impact.

When asked about compulsory acquisition of land for the project, be it for power distribution between turbines and/or the sub-station, for road re-alignments or widening, or for the high voltage transmission line required to connect the sub-station to the main power grid, FERA repeated many times that as a private company they have no powers to compulsorily acquire land and that no compulsory acquisition would be made for any part of the proposed project.

Many questions were asked regarding the route of the proposed high voltage transmission line, but only a general area was indicated as the actual route will depend on the location of the sub-station and the point of interconnection to the main power grid. This area covers approximately Mt Bernard in the North West, Murrindindi in the South West, Alexandra in the South East and Upton Hill in the North East.

Agreement must be made with any landholders in the path of the proposed transmission line, which would consist of steel lattice towers, operating at either 220kV or 330kV. Tranmission lines of this capacity typically require a cleared easement of approximately 60m.

Other information given by FERA covered the possibility of payments or subsidies to neighbouring landholders who do not want to host turbines, the creation of a community consultative committee to manage funds donated by FERA to be distributed for use in community projects. FERA suggested the sum of \$0.5 million pa.

FERA plans to hold the next community meeting on 20 May 2023 following the same format of one at Ruffy and Upton Hill.

FERA repeatedly said it is happy to meet with every member of the community - and is open to direct contact by anyone.

Darryl Otzen - Secretary (SRRCG)
Strathbogies Responsible Renewables Community Group www.srrcg.com



Presented by RuffArtZ



Foundation Murrindindi opened its Green Grant program on March 1st.

The Green Grant program focuses on our impact area of environment and sustainability. This is the second year this grant has been available.

Community groups across Murrindindi Shire are invited to apply for grants of up to \$500 to support community led initiatives that increase community participation in conservation and sustainability, maintain or enhance the natural environment in Murrindindi Shire or tackle climate change, waste reduction and reduce greenhouse gas emissions.

Through our inaugural Green Grant round last year, the Foundation was able to support a number of projects across the Shire including a whole school environmental awareness program at Marysville Primary School, new compost bins and worm farms at Kinglake West Primary School and Microbat Box workshops at Yea Community House. These initiatives have provided some tangible environmental benefits.

We are excited to support new community-led projects through this year's Green Grant program, that contribute to a positive impact on our local environment and promote environmental stewardship and sustainability.

The Foundation Murrindindi Green Grant program is open until 31 March 2023. Information about the program is available in the grants section of the Foundation's website www.foundationmurrindindi.org.au

Best wishes,

Robyn Hill - Executive Officer Ph: 0488 007 688

www.foundationmurrindindi.org.au



https://www.environment.vic.gov.au/bushb ank/habitat-restoration-on-private-land

This URL says it all really.

If you are interested in restoring habitat on your own land, use the link to find out more about Bush Bank.

Ruffy Fire Brigade's

Royal Children's Hospital
Good Friday Appeal
Seafood Luncheon and
Community Fundraising Event
is on again!



Friday 7 April 2023
@ 12.30pm
All Welcome
Put that date in your diary!

Strathbogie Ranges Conservation Network present

Adventures in Nature Polly McQuinns to Gooram Falls

Saturday 18th March @ 9.30am



The first Adventure in Nature of 2023 is the same as our very first Riparian Walk back in 2018. This is one of the all time great walks of the Shire of Strathbogie, with stunning granite gorges, thick bush and meandering creeklines to keep walkers entertained.

RSVPs are essential, so please email us at admin@strathbogieranges.org

Start Location: Polly McQuinns Weir, 716 Galls Gap

Rd, Strathbogie

Finish Location: Gooram Falls Day Visitor Area, Euroa-

Mansfield Rd, Gooram **Difficulty:** Hard

Length: 7km, 5-6 hours

Bring: Water, a hat, sturdy shoes, lunch and snacks



Letter to the Editor

Dear Editor,

Your weekly editorial regularly concludes with: "As this decade moves along let's continue to appreciate the wonderful and unique places we all call home."

Whether we farm cattle or sheep, grow olives or grapes, own tourist ventures such as a winery, a cellar door, a farm stay, an Airbnb, or plant trees to offset carbon emissions and provide corridors for threatened native species, let us not permit the desecration, at any cost, of the unique environment of the Southern Strathbogies with out- of- scale landscape intrusions.

Susan Ackroyd - Caveat-Dropmore Road

Letter to the Editor

Drones

Drones are now a familiar aspect of modern life. I confess a certain fascination with the technology and marvel at their potential use.

Wherever you look you will find them operating across a wide range of activities. Farmers use them to check stock; film makers use them to add special effects; photographers experiment with them, even at weddings; researchers use them in field work; firefighters use them to monitor fires; in disasters, they can be invaluable and of course they can be fun for the whole family in many situations. For quite some time they have also been used to kill and bomb in conflict and war. The current use in Ukraine is a sad and tragic example. We now understand the RAAF is interested in adding them to their arsenal of weapons. It does grate with those of us who long for instruments of peace.

Like all new developments, they are open to misuse. Recently, with some other landholders we have experienced the intrusion of rogue operators. Thankfully they were caught and their names registered with the police. It is not a nice feeling when someone cases out your home and property. Someone hinted that the next time it happens the artillery will be brought out. I am not sure of the legal ramifications of that, but I sympathise with the intention.

I look with interest at the plans of the HCCC to operate a drone to monitor the deer population. Clearly a valuable project, given the seriousness of the infestation. I assume that when the time comes the relevant landholders will be informed of the date and time the survey takes place. It would also be helpful to receive reports of the survey via the Granite News.

Stuart Reid - Highlands



FOR SALE

3 seater brown leather couch, very heavy. Good condition, some wear on one arm as shown. \$150 ONO.

Call Sue 0411 010 379.



MURRINDINDI SHIRE COUNCIL NEWS



MURRINDINDI COMMUNITY MEETING

Would you like to speak to Council about topics that affect you and your community? Council is hosting an Open Community Meeting in Murrindindi for residents to talk directly to Murrindindi Shire Councillors about issues or ideas that are important to you or your community.

Date: Wednesday 29 March 2023

Time: 5.00 - 7.00 pm

Venue: Murrindindi-Woodbourne Community Hub, 815 Murrindindi Road, Murrindindi

You will have five minutes allocated to talk directly with Murrindindi Shire Councillors about issues or ideas that are important to you and your community, and you may be speaking in front of members of the public, as well as Council officers. If you, or your community group, would like to speak to Council, you are invited to attend the meeting. Prior registration if not required, we'll greet you and collect your details on the evening.

For more information, email governance@murrindindi.vic.gov.au or call Council on 5772 0333

INTERNATIONAL WOMEN'S DAY - WHAT'S ON AT YOUR LIBRARIES ACROSS THE SHIRE

We are proud to demonstrate our commitment to this year's International Women's Day (IWD) theme of 'Embrace Equality' by hosting several initiatives, activities and events related to IWD throughout the entire month of March.

Our libraries in Alexandra, Yea and Kinglake will be featuring dedicated book displays of women writers, feminist writers/poets, First Nations women writers/poets, for both adults and young readers alike. Storytime in March will focus on works by women and movie nights will feature films celebrating women.

There will also be an opportunity to access the Sydney Opera House's 'All About Women' events at selected libraries. These livestreamed talks will be delivered by some extraordinary thinkers, writers, and artists. Most of the available streams pose vital questions about gender, equity, and justice. Equality is the goal and equity is the means to get there. Our libraries are committed to creating equitable opportunities for the entire community. We invite you to celebrate IWD with us this March!

For more information on events and to register to attend, visit murrindindi.vic.gov.au/libraries or call your local library on 5772 0333



CITIZEN OF THE YEAR AWARDS NOMINATIONS OPEN!

Nominations for the Murrindindi Shire Citizen of the Year Awards are open from now until Sunday 2 April 2023. Council is encouraging all Shire residents to think about an individual or community group that inspires you and to consider nominating them for one of the four Award categories:

- · Murrindindi Shire Citizen of the Year
- Murrindindi Shire Senior Citizen of the Year
- Murrindindi Shire Young Citizen of the Year
- Murrindindi Shire Community Group of the Year (our new Community Group of the Year Award category seeks to recognise not-for-profit community groups and organisations who demonstrate outstanding achievements.)

Nominations close on Sunday 2 April 2023, and entries will be judged from 11 April, with winners of the Awards announced and presented at Council-led events during National Volunteer Week (15-21 May 2023).

Visit theloop.murrindindi.vic.gov.au/awards for more information and to nominate an individual or community group for an Award.

TENDER - SEALED ROADS MAJOR PATCHING PROGRAM

Council invites suitably qualified contractors to submit a tender bid for Council's Sealed Roads Major Patching Program 2022/23. Works as part of the Program will take place across Murrindindi Shire.

Visit eprocure.com.au/murrindindi to download tender documents or make an enquiry. Tender bids close at 3.00 pm, Tuesday 4 April 2023.

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







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.