

THE GRANITE NEWS



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



14th April 2024 | Volume 18 Issue 12

Welcome, Wumindjika & G'day

Welcome back to another 11 weeks of interesting and informative reading about the environment, as well as the activities and events in the HCCC local area. I hope that you enjoy the ride.

During the last 2 weeks the Editor's inbox has seen a plethora of emails land so there should be lots to read and enjoy this week.

Please read on for another interesting issue, Pauline And Kenny? Was checking out his friend, the Spotted Quoll.

It's a busy week for meetings in Ruffy this week...

Notice of Annual General Meeting

The Annual General Meeting of the Ruffy Community Action Group will be held on **Tuesday 16th April** at the Tablelands Community Centre, 27 Nolans Road Ruffy, commencing at 7:30pm.

If you have any interest in the development of our community please come along and show your support.

Darryl Otzen, President
ruffycag@gmail.com

Ruffy Fire Brigade Annual General Meeting

will be held at the Ruffy Fire shed at on **Monday 15th April** at 7.30pm.

Elections for Captain and lieutenant roles as well as the Brigade management team positions will be held this night.

Enquiries? please contact the Secretary **Ann Laherty-Hunt** 0421 364263.



NB: By Monday morning (15/4) the 2023-24 Fire Season will have ceased in all 3 HCCC local government areas.

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

"I don't need an inspirational quote
- I need a coffee."

Anon



Month	Highlands	Ruffy	Terip
March	6 mm	9 mm	TBC mm
2024 Total	212.7 mm	178 mm	TBC mm
Rainy Days	2 days	1 day	TBC

Variable Dates & Events

 Set Dates & Times

What's On - April & May 2024		
	Monday 15th April @ 7.30	RUFFY CFA AGM @ Ruffy Fire Shed Elections for Captain & Lieutenant roles as well as the BMT positions will be held. Enquiries? - Ann 0421 364263
	Tuesday 16th April @ 7.30	RUFFY COMMUNITY ACTION GROUP AGM @ Tablelands Community Centre If you have any interest in our community please come along and show your support
Details? see p.7	Sunday 21st April 1.30 for 2	THE HAUNTING of ALVIN COHAN a dramatic Masque @ Hillcrest Studio, Highlands
	Thurs. 25th April @ 5.30	SECRET MEN'S BUSINESS @ Caveat Church All people in the district are welcome, pink note (\$5) donation towards BBQ, BYO & chat.
	Sunday 28th April @ 10am	HIGHLANDS RAMBLERS starting @ Highlands Community Hall Everyone is welcome. Enquiries? Andrew 0437 249038 or Robyn 0409 528235
	Fri. 3rd May from 6pm	FIRST FRIDAY of the MONTH @ Tablelands Community Centre It's time to put the fun back into Friday nights! Enquiries? 0427 690970 or tccruffy@gmail.com
	Sat. 4th May 6-8pm	HIGHLANDS BOOK CLUB @ Highlands Community Hall All welcome, BYO plate to share & preferred beverage. Gold coin donation. 'There are several options to choose from 'The Leopard', 'The Spy & the Traitor' and 'Unearthing'. Enquiries? Robyn 0409 528235
	Every Second Wednesday 10-30-12.30	MURRINDINDI MOBILE LIBRARY SERVICE @ Highlands Community Hall The Mobile Library visits the TGN area, based at the Highlands Hall every fortnight. Why not pop in? Forthcoming dates are 17th April & 1st, 15th & 29th May.
	Every Monday @ 7pm	TABLE TENNIS MONDAYS @TCC Ruffy Come along & have some fun! Enquiries? 0427 690970 or tccruffy@gmail.com
	Every Tuesday - 6pm	MAT PILATES with ANASTASIA @ Highlands Community Hall BYO own mat and water bottle - Cost \$15 cash Enquiries? 0436 428065
	1st & 3rd Tuesdays 1-3	DIGITAL & ON-LINE LEARNING @ TCC, 27 Nolans Rd, Ruffy 16th April & 7th and 21st May 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
NEW times!	Mon 8.45-9.45am Wed. 6.15-7.15pm	CUSTOM YOGA is BACK with Ingrid at the Tablelands Community Centre \$25 per hour long class BYO mat and blanket Enquiries? Ingrid ingstar.7@gmail.com
Date for Diaries!	Thurs. 2nd May - all day!	SOIL HEALTH & SUSTAINABLE FARMING WORKSHOP @ Seymour Racecourse Come and hear Matthew Evans and other knowledgeable speakers on this vital topic!

Success story!!

After many years of frustration, the actions of the HCCC have had a win.

The blackberry infestation along Highlands Road adjacent to the Buckland creek (Rocky Passes) has for many years been a "Blackberry farm" and a source of anger and frustration to the locals.

With the assistance of the biosecurity officer from DEECA, the owner of this land contacted the weeds facilitator at HCCC. When I thanked him for contacting me and mentioned that we had been searching for him for a number of years, he was surprised and said, "I have not been in hiding I have always been here, I did not realise you were looking for me".

After a brief conversation I was able to get him in contact with Susan Milroy from Hillside Spraying, within a few weeks he met with Susan at the property and the weeds were sprayed within 2 days of that meeting.

There are still some areas to be sprayed and we still need to find the other landowners along the creek to continue the good work.

Special thanks to

Lauren Donaldson - A/Regional manager - Plants, Chemicals & Invasives Northern

Oliver Goodwin - Bio Security Officer – Invasives

Susan Milroy – Hillside Weed Spraying.

Mr Farah - Landowner

Neil van Buuren

HCCC - Facilitator - Weeds



Congratulations to all those readers who took the time to contact DEECA, to Neil for persisting with trying to resolve this issue of many years and to the owner for his response. Hopefully the other land owners of the remaining 'Blackberry farms' will be as receptive and responsive when contacted. Ed.

🍷 🍏 🍷 Tastes of the Goulburn is a great day out - tickets are on sale now 🍷 🍏 🍷
Sat 27th April, 10am-4pm in Station St, Seymour.

Tastes of the Goulburn is a not-for-profit event run by a committee of hard-working volunteers. Their mission is to showcase the Goulburn Valley as a premium, quality, unique and boutique food and wine region and all our exhibitors are from the area, including Mitchell Shire, Goulburn Valley, Upper Goulburn, Nagambie Lakes and Strathbogie.



HCCC LANDCARE PRESENTS: SOIL HEALTH & SUSTAINABLE FARMING

Keynote speaker:
Matthew Evans

Seymour Racecourse

9:30am Thursday 2nd May 2024



Tickets required - click on link or scan QR code

<https://events.humanitix.com/healthy-soils-and-low-carbon-farming>



The Hughes Creek Catchment Collaborative presents a workshop on Soil Health and Sustainable Farming.

Our Keynote speaker will be Matthew Evans - Food Writer, Farmer, Television Broadcaster and Chef
Matthew Evans is a food writer, farmer, television broadcaster and chef.

Additional speakers:

Dr Cassandra Scheffe - Soil Scientist

Cassie has authored 16 scientific journal papers and numerous conference proceedings and is accredited as a Certified Professional Soil Scientist (CPSS) by Soil Science Australia.

Matt Shanahan - Principal RMCG consulting

Matt has been working extensively in the field of recycled water and organics management.

Dr Helen Hayden - Soil microbial ecologist - Melbourne University

Dr Helen Hayden's research interests include soil biology, soil health soil plant microbe interactions and plant pathology.

Declan McDonald - Certified Professional Soil Scientist & Agricultural and Horticultural Scientist - Regen soils

Declan has over 30 years' experience in soil and agricultural management.

This is a free event – tickets required.

Click on the link -<https://events.humanitix.com/healthy-soils-and-low-carbon-farming>

A light lunch will also be served.



Matthew Evans

LOOK - this is NEW!!

Mat Pilates with Anastasia

every Tuesday at 6pm at the Highlands Hall

Bring your own mat and water bottle.
Cost - \$15 cash

Enquiries? 0436 428065



The Soilkee Renovator is returning to the HCCC area!

Readers may remember that the Soilkee Renovator visited Highlands last year as part of the Soil Carbon project. If readers are interested in having the Soilkee assist with their land care management it's coming back to our area during the last week of April.

Why not give Nevin a call **0474 243299** to arrange a visit to YOUR place.

Thinking of putting in a multi-species Covercrop?

Think SOILKEE



How does the Soilkee renovator work?

- A diverse mix of seeds from clover seed to faba bean size can be applied from the seed box during operation with seeds dropping in kee's. The Kee's are mechanically made by rotating blades, leaving around 80% of the pasture undisturbed
- The undisturbed portion acts as a cover crop protecting the soil from the elements, reducing erosion and keeping around 80% of soil life habitat intact.
- Creating the seed bed the Soilkee Renovator provides additional benefits of aeration and a green manure crop within the worked up portion, providing aerobic conditions and a food source that activates the soil fungi, bacteria and earthworm populations and the natural soil processes they perform.



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Your Soilkee contracting specialists at:

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0474 243 299

www.nevinfarm.com.au



Highlands Happenings...

Lockie celebrates the BIG 80!

Friends and family of Lockie Cameron gathered at the Highlands Hall on Saturday 6th April to help him celebrate an impressive achievement - his 80th birthday. An excellent time was had by all, including the birthday boy, who enjoyed the happy occasion. Congratulations Lockie and Happy Birthday!!



Accessibility for All at the Highlands Hall

Highlands Community Drinks on the Deck attendees checking out the hall's new wheelchair accessible entry ramp.

The new ramp, handrails and upgraded sanitary facilities were made possible by the Public Safety on Public Lands' grant from DEECA.



The Haunting Of Alvin Cohan



The inaugural live performance of The Haunting of Alvin Cohan, a 'dramatic masque'* by composer David Adams will be presented as a workshop production on

**21st April 2024, at Hillcrest, the Studio Gallery
home of artist Dennis Spiteri,
33 Old Highlands Road, Highlands, Victoria.**

Doors open 1.30pm

Performance 2pm

Entry by Donation

*A dramatic masque - [masque (noun): a type of theatre entertainment including poetry, singing, and dancing, performed in England in the 16th and 17th centuries, especially at a royal court]

See website for further information and booking:

<https://thehauntingofalvincohan.davidadamsmusic.com/>

Biochar anyone?

Biochar is increasingly used in agriculture for soil improvement, water retention, feedstock additives (to improve digestion and reduce methane), etc. It is now used in concrete production and has also been used as an energy source.

The Carbon Journey of One Tree

When a tree grows, it absorbs/sequesters carbon dioxide from the atmosphere via the process of photosynthesis. If the tree is allowed to stand indefinitely, it continues to sequester CO₂ and store carbon in the tree, such that 25% of the weight of the living tree is carbon. As the tree ages, however, the rate of sequestration declines, until it reaches an equilibrium state, where it has net zero sequestration, but continues to store sequestered carbon in the tree.

If the tree is harvested, half the dry weight of the tree is carbon. If the tree is chipped and used in short-lived products (e.g. paper or mulch), most of the carbon has returned to the atmosphere as CO₂ within a few years. If the tree is milled and partly converted to building timber, the carbon in that timber product may remain sequestered for 50-100 years.

However, if the wood in the tree is pyrolyzed (i.e. "burnt" in an oxygen-free environment), half the carbon in the tree is converted to BioChar, a stable form of carbon with a half-life of up to a thousand years.

Dr Tony Richardson and Rita Seethaler, have established forestry plantations, one at Thornton and the other at Kanumbra. They have recently decided to direct the Kanumbra forestry area to the production of biochar as there are significant advantages in biochar production - shorter turn around, more effective carbon sequestration, a developing market for biochar, etc.

Tony will be giving a talk on biochar that will tell the story of the Carbon Journey of One Tree, and highlight the environmental and economic benefits of Pyrolysis, BioChar and associated products.

Set aside **Monday 22 April at 6.00 pm at the Flood Recovery Hub, 4 Guild Street, Seymour** (Presbyterian Church hall) to find out more.



Letter to the Editor

The SRRCG committee will be holding a public meeting on **Saturday 20th April, 9:30am at the Country Club Hotel, Yea**, to provide information to the residents of the Yea area on Fera's proposed 'Seymour Wind Farm'.

Fera are continuing to canvas landowners in the Yea area in an attempt to gain access to land for the high voltage transmission line required by the project. Maps that have been shown to landowners in the Yea area show multiple proposed transmission line routes, most, if not all, of which pass through properties that are opposed to Fera's project.

More details on our web site <https://www.srrcg.com/post/yea-community-meeting>

We have signs available for anyone who is interested - \$20 each or 3 for \$50. Contact info@srrcg.com if you want some.

Darryl Otzen

Secretary srrcg.com
Strathbogies Responsible Renewable Community Group



Letter to the Editor

Energy and AI

At the last Landcare meeting there was general discussion of future Bio technologies to control pest plant and weeds, somehow there were some suggestions of the future and fear of AI.

There has yet to be a universally accepted technical or legal definition of AI. The best definition from the NSW government is that AI is **“the ability of a computer system to perform tasks that would normally require human intelligence, such as learning, reasoning, and making decisions”**.

AI encompasses various specialised domains that focus on different tasks. Examples include Machine Learning, which enables computers to learn from data; Computer Vision, allowing them to interpret visual information; and Natural Language Processing, for understanding and generating human language.

By coincidence I came upon this paper on just the energy use of AI into the future.

Some key takeaways from this paper by Alex de Vries, a PhD candidate at VU Amsterdam

- “de Vries calculates that by 2027 the AI sector could consume between 85 to 134 terawatt hours each year. That’s about the same as the annual energy demand of de Vries’ home country, the Netherlands.”
- “You’re talking about AI electricity consumption potentially being half (0.5%) a percent of global electricity consumption by 2027,” de Vries tells The Verge. “I think that’s a pretty significant number.”
- AI Training, in particular, is extremely energy intensive, consuming much more electricity than traditional data center activities. Training a large language model like GPT-3, for example, is estimated to use just under 1,300 megawatt hours (MWh) of electricity; about as much power as consumed annually by 130 US homes.
- generating one image using AI can use almost as much energy as charging your smartphone.
- An International energy agency says current data center energy usage stands at around 460 terawatt hours (TWh) in 2022 and could increase to between 620 and 1,050 TWh in 2026, equivalent to the energy demands of Sweden or Germany, respectively. Australia energy use in 2022 was 244 TWh.

But de Vries says putting these figures in context is important. He notes that between 2010 and 2018, data center energy usage has been fairly stable, accounting for around 1 to 2 percent of global consumption. (And when we say “data centres” here we mean everything that makes up “the internet”: from the internal servers of corporations to all the apps you can’t use offline on your smartphone.)

But as articles says these numbers will reduce as energy efficient technologies using AI to develop new ways of saving energy. But the demand and size of these systems are planned to increase, and that’s where we get into an interesting circular paradigm.

A local context, Cherry Tree Wind farm with 16 turbines, has a capacity of about 57.6 MW, generating about 180 GWh or 0.18TWh per year, not even close enough to power the world data centre needs, estimated to be around 620 and 1,050 TWh.

Something to think about when using your smart phone on the internet and generating photos and text using Chat GPT, or just using Google, Microsoft and other social media platforms.

I am not suggesting or am I against using computers, I use them every day to earn money and seek information. Sue and I have 5 computers for different uses.

AI as it is called now or neural interworks are here to stay and we will learn to adapt. I recall in the 1970s when computers were growing fast it was thought then we will all be unemployed soon. Fast forward 60 years and we have labour shortages around the world.

Source and further reading.

<https://www.digital.nsw.gov.au/policy/artificial-intelligence/a-common-understanding-simplified-ai-definitions-from-leading>

<https://www.ibm.com/topics/artificial-intelligence>

<https://www.theverge.com/24066646/ai-electricity-energy-watts-generative-consumption>

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=0ZraZPFVr-U>

<https://www.energy.gov.au/energy-data/australian-energy-statistics/energy-consumption>

<https://www.britannica.com/technology/artificial-intelligence>

Neil van Buuren

Are you interested in adding to the
iNaturalist'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.

Community lunch to address emergency management

The Strathbogie Tableland **Local Emergency Action Plan (LEAP)** Steering Group will host its first community meeting with a lunch on **Sunday April 21, 2024**.

This free community lunch will be where residents can learn more and have their say on a range of local emergency management issues. This gathered information will form Strathbogie's own LEAPing into Resilience document.

As part of the LEAPing into Resilience Project, the Strathbogie community meeting comes after the same process has been successfully undertaken in Violet Town, Avenel and Euroa and is in the initial stages for the Nagambie community.

Strathbogie Shire Council Administrator Peter Stephenson said the LEAP Program is a fantastic way for the community to document and manage their own emergency.

"The LEAP project team has worked closely with three of our communities Violet Town, Avenel and Euroa to complete their plans and I encourage Strathbogie Tableland residents to assist their steering group with their emergency preparedness feedback for their town. Locals possess valuable knowledge, such as escape routes and identifying vulnerable community members, which is essential in crafting effective emergency action plans tailored to each community's needs," he said.

The steering groups have received guidance from Danna Lezcano, the project's Resilience Planning Officer, and Mark Leitinger, the Emergency Management Officer for Strathbogie Shire Council.

The plans will remain dynamic, subject to annual amendments, ensuring their relevance and efficacy. Collaboration among the municipalities of Strathbogie, Mansfield, and Murrindindi has been instrumental in supporting communities to prepare for emergencies, including extreme weather events, and other disasters.

The LEAPing into Resilience project stands as a testament to this joint initiative, driven by the shared goal of enhancing community preparedness and resilience.

RSVP by 17 April (with any dietary or accessibility requirements) to: Danna Lezcano (Resilience Planning Officer) Email: dlezcano@murrindindi.vic.gov.au Telephone: (03) 5772 0333

LEAPing into Resilience is a three-year project funded by the Federal Government in collaboration with Mansfield and Murrindindi Shire Councils.

For further information:

Merrill Boyd
E: Merrill.boyd@strathbogie.vic.gov.au
P: 0438 678 323



Victorian Landcare Grants 2024 Applications Open

The Victorian Government has opened the 2024 VLG with project grants with up to \$20,000 available for on-ground works and community education projects focused on enhancing the natural environment, including native vegetation and wildlife, waterways and soils.

Grants are available for any not-for-profit groups.

Applications close on 30th April 2024

<https://www.vic.gov.au/2024-victorian-landcare-grants>



130KM | 85KM | 30KM



SUNDAY 21 APRIL 2024

Seven Creeks Park, Kirkland Avenue, Euroa



START TIME – 8am (130km) | 8.15am (85km)
| 8.30am (30km)

LEVEL – Hard & Recreational

SURFACE – Road

FULLY SUPPORTED RIDE - FREE BBQ AT THE FINISH

COST -

BEFORE APRIL 7 – \$85 (130km & 85km) | \$35 (30km)

AFTER APRIL 7 – \$100 (130km & 85km) | \$45 (30km)

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ADVANCE NOTICE

Another Date for your Diaries

The magnificent autumnal garden 'LAKITHI' will be open to the public on

Saturday 4th & Sunday 5th May 2024

Located in Terip Terip - 948 Top Road.

This opening is in conjunction with Open Gardens Victoria and is a fundraising event.

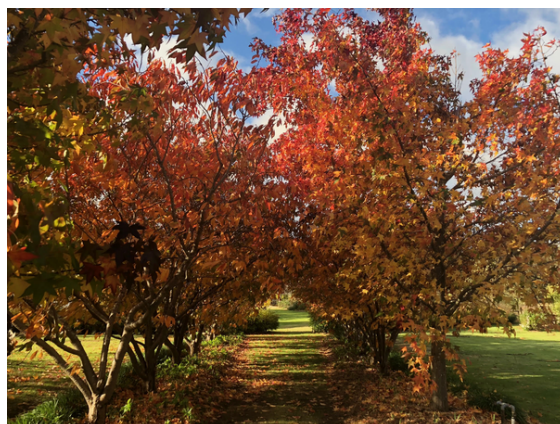
Our share will be donated to the CFA.

Why not 'Save the Date' NOW to visit LAKITHI & support our local CFA.

There will also be a plant stall & the local Terip Terip Tennis Club will be serving Devonshire Teas in the garden.

Enquiries? Contact Gail (van Rooyen)
0439 904 254

or email.... gailvanrooyen@yahoo.com.au



Celebrating volunteers in Mitchell Shire

Every week hundreds of generous volunteers give up their time to support Mitchell Shire's community groups and programs. That's why Mitchell Shire Council is celebrating National Volunteer Week 2024 by supporting local volunteers.

Community groups can apply for a grant of up to \$500. Funds can support volunteer thank you events or activities, training and development or transport.

To apply for the grant, visit mitchellshire.vic.gov.au/volunteer-grant Applications close Tues. 30 April.

National Volunteer Week from 20 to 26 May highlights the positive impact that volunteers have on the community, the many ways that people can volunteer and the work that many organisations do to support volunteers. This year's national theme is Something for Everyone.

Mitchell Shire Council is also using the week to encourage groups who may be seeking volunteers and people who may be thinking about volunteering to visit the Volunteering Mitchell website to add or view current opportunities.

To see volunteer opportunities near you, visit the Volunteering Mitchell website. For groups wanting to be featured on the website or for those who would like some help applying for the grant, please call 5734 6200.

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**Strathbogie Granite
 Project**
neil.phillips@bigpond.com



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.