

THE GRANITE NEWS



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



25th August 2024 | Volume 18 Issue 29

Welcome, Wumindjika & G'day

On Saturday 24th August the HCCC had probably its shortest meeting on record with President Justus welcoming the attendees, tabling the Treasurer's Report and then moving on to farewelling Peter and me from Highlands and the HCCC area.

A huge thank-you to those wonderful TGN readers / HCCC landholders who came to Euroa to wish us all the best for the future, your thoughts and good wishes were very much appreciated and merely reinforce what we love about this special part of the world - its caring community.

As Justus mentioned in last week's TGN I will be continuing as Editor of this great little community newsletter thanks to the marvels of 21st Century technology. I am looking forward to doing so because, not only do I enjoy editing each week's issue, but it also means keeping in touch with the area we've called home for more than 25 years. Thanks for the privilege to do so.

Please read on for another interesting issue, Pauline And Kenny? Was overseeing Pauline & Peter's farewell invite.

NEW SPEED LIMIT at HIGHLANDS

In an effort to ensure a safer precinct around the Highlands Hall intersection the speed limit has been lowered to 80kms along all three approach roads for several hundred metres.

The new signs are pretty obvious to all.



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

"Life is like a camera, just focus on what is important and capture the good times. Develop from the negatives and if things don't work out, just take another shot."

Anon



FUN FACTS ABOUT VEGES

Did you know - Potatoes were first cultivated by the Incas of Peru. The Spanish conquistadors took some potatoes back to Europe in 1536. In 1589, Sir Walter Raleigh introduced potatoes to Ireland.

Marie Antoinette sometimes wore potato flowers in her hair.

The Irish potato famine resulted in almost one million people dying from starvation or disease.

Potatoes were the first vegetable to be grown in space, on the space shuttle Columbia. **Source: Yea Chronicle**

What's On - August & September 2024		
	Mon. 26th Aug. @ 1.30	RUFFY VEGE GROWERS' CLUB @ Hagen's 214 Wiebye Track, Ruffy New members are always welcome Enquiries: Janet 0458 904268
Details? See p.6	Wed. 28th Aug. @ 5.30	MONTHLY MASTERMINDS CARD NIGHTS @ Highlands Hall Challenging enough to keep you interested, but not so hard you want to go home!
	Thurs. 29th Aug. @ 5.30	SECRET MEN'S BUSINESS @ Caveat Church All people in the district are welcome, pink note (\$5) donation towards BBQ, BYO & chat
Details? See p.6	Sat. 31st Aug. @ 6pm	HIGHLANDS BOOKCLUB  @ Highlands Hall
	Fri. 6th Sept 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.7th & Sun. 8th Sept 10-4	DARREN GILBERT'S OPEN STUDIO @ 5 Gifford Sy, Yea Open the first weekend each month - discover some stunning artwork
	Sun. 8th Sept. @ 7.30pm	TERIP TENNIS CLUB AGM @ Terip Rec Reserve All welcome. Details? Cindy 0429 772011
	Mon. 9th Sept. @ 11.30	HIGHLANDS SPINNERS @ 450 Caveat-Dropmore Rd Highlands Spinning Club will get together - same place, same time with the same good company. BYO lunch and great tea & coffee will be provided. Enquiries? Jan - 5790 4361
	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 4th & 18th September.
	Every Monday @ 7pm	Not happening in winter - too cold! 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 3rd & 17th September 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
	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

Murrindindi Shire Council Statement on the Proposed Seymour Wind Farm Project

Murrindindi Shire Council acknowledges the proposal by Fera Australia to construct a large wind farm called the Seymour Wind Farm in the area between Avenel, Longwood, Ponkeen Creek and Ruffy in Victoria. The proposed project is said to feature 80 to 100 wind turbines that are up to 245 metres tall and require approximately 30km of new 330kV transmission lines, proposed to be overhead, mainly across private and crown land within Murrindindi Shire.

While the Murrindindi Shire community generally recognises the potential benefits of renewable energy projects, Council acknowledges the significant concerns raised by residents regarding the Seymour Wind Farm's potential social, economic, and environmental impacts in our "culturally significant, environmentally sensitive, ecologically diverse and pristine" region.

Council believes it is important to carefully balance the need for renewable energy generation with the protection of local amenity, environment, agriculture, tourism, and social outcomes. We have reached out to Fera Australia to seek a more comprehensive and meaningful community engagement process to ensure community concerns are heard, considered and addressed effectively. Council has suggested that citizen panels could be effective in expressing and tackling community concerns, including consideration by Fera Australia for the undergrounding of transmission infrastructure to protect our significant and celebrated landscapes.

As the Seymour Wind Farm project is still in its preliminary stages, Council encourages Fera Australia to step up community engagement efforts and conduct thorough environmental and social impact assessments. If a permit application is made to the Victorian Minister for Planning, who will ultimately assess and determine the project's outcome, Council will provide a submission as a referral authority that will clearly reflect the community's views.

Murrindindi Shire Council remains committed to supporting sustainable development that benefits the local community while minimising negative impacts. We will continue to monitor the progress of the Seymour Wind Farm project and advocate for outcomes that protect the unique character and values of our Shire.

Editor's Note - Although it is possible that all 3 local government areas within the HCCC area (Mitchell, Murrindindi and Strathbogie) will have areas designated for the proposed wind farm, with the unveiling of the transmission line options, Murrindindi is by far the most impacted LGA.



Conservationist helps farmers protect 'paddock trees' and restore degraded land

The single native tree, standing by itself in a paddock, is an iconic image of the Australian landscape.

These lonely trees are a reminder of what once existed before vast swathes of the country were deforested. They provide shelter, habitat for insects, and act as stepping-stones for wildlife as they move across the landscape, tree grower and conservationist Steve Murphy says. "In a distant time, we're going to lose them all because they're not actually naturally regenerating," Mr Murphy says, citing research conducted in the early 2000s by ecologists at the Australian National University.



For Mr Murphy, protecting the space around these "paddock trees" so they can regenerate is part of a bigger picture.

As a nursery owner who was growing trees for farmers to plant on their properties, Mr Murphy became concerned with the quality of the revegetation efforts he was seeing. "Farm plantations that had been put in perhaps 20 or 30 years ago were already collapsing ... they were providing very little shelter, they were needing to be replanted," he says. "I started to ask, 'How could we make these plantations become sustainable, to behave like a natural part of the bush, where they just sustain themselves?'"

Given Australia's abysmal record as a world leader of deforestation, biodiversity loss and mammal extinction, Mr Murphy's question is a pertinent one.

What Mr Murphy settled on were a series of ideas landholders could follow to restore degraded land by planting wide corridors of endemic plants – from shrubs and grasses to tall trees – which would "mimic nature".

On the outskirts of Ballarat, volunteer group the Ballarat Region Treegrowers invited Mr Murphy to put his theory into action on a patch of bare, weedy land, owned by mining company Suvo Minerals. The group wanted to demonstrate a forestry plantation that optimised biodiversity, secretary of Ballarat Region Treegrowers Gib Wettenhall says. Called the ImLal Biorich Plantation, it includes a small percentage of tree species planted to later remove for timber or firewood – something Mr Murphy encourages as he believes it could entice landowners to designate larger areas of land to revegetation.

Since its inception in 2010, wildlife abundance has been tracked through yearly bird surveys and Mr Wettenhall says motion sensor cameras have also found phascogales, feathertail gliders, sugar gliders and the occasional koala using the restored landscape. Mr Wettenhall's small publishing press later released a book by Mr Murphy called **Recreating the Country**, which summarised the landscape restoration design principles he developed through his many years working in conservation – something he grew into after having trained as a geologist.

Considering biodiversity when undertaking landscape restoration is crucial when attempting to tackle the twin challenges of climate change and biodiversity loss, says Patrick O'Connor, associate professor of environmental economics at Adelaide University. Professor O'Connor has been researching market-based schemes that can optimise biodiversity conservation. Currently there is no national scheme in place, he says.

He warns that sometimes carbon storage is prioritised at the expense of biodiversity.

"If you're trying to optimise carbon you may not plant that structural and diverse mix of species ... that supports a much more complex, dynamic ecosystem," he says. "It's often because you're looking to sell the carbon to somebody else ... so you'll look for the cheapest place in the landscape to do that restoration.

"That won't take the revegetation to places that are over-cleared, where there are fertile soils, where the land values are high, where smaller revegetation patches can be very important in connecting up the landscape."

One of the case studies featured in Mr Murphy's book is merino sheep farmer Steve Donaldson. When Mr Donaldson took over his family's 900-hectare farm at Inverleigh, near Geelong in regional Victoria, in the late 1990s, one problem loomed large: weeds. "You're constantly spending time to control [weeds] and I wanted to seek a permanent way of keeping them out," Mr Donaldson says.

Initially, with help from Landcare, Mr Donaldson began fencing off areas of his land to revegetate with native species as a weed management strategy.

Continued on p.5



Conservationist helps farmers protect 'paddock trees' and restore degraded land

Continued from p.4

Mr Donaldson began sourcing plants from Mr Murphy who advised him on revegetation strategies. "As the years go by you get a bit more inspired. I think what they're saying might be good, so you take a few more chances and devote a bit more land," Mr Donaldson says.

Twenty-five years after he started revegetation work, about 20 per cent of Mr Donaldson's land is fenced off from stock and in the process of revegetating, he says. "In recent years, I haven't had to spray pesticides because I've got more flocks of birds around, which Steve said would happen," Mr Donaldson says. "So, this integrated pest management they talk about has become a factor as well, because I'm providing habitat."

He says another unintended benefit has been financial. At a recent valuation of his property he was told the vegetation had increased the value of his farm by about 30 per cent.

Funding for revegetation can be inconsistent and hard to come by, Mr Donaldson says, and the work on his farm hasn't progressed lineally but rather in fits and starts as money became available. Current revegetation works on his farm are funded and coordinated by the Corangamite Catchment Management Authority. Less tangible but equally important to Mr Donaldson is the meaning growing forests and protecting native grasslands have given him. "You think over your lifetime, 'Well, yeah, I have done something, and it looks nice, it's lovely to be here,'" he says. "I just wanted to be able to see something at the end of my days that I'm really proud of, and you've got to be a bit innovative don't you."

Fostering the return of nature requires steely resolve, and Mr Murphy remains hopeful.

"In the big picture I see an Australian landscape where high-quality vegetation corridors have been re-established allowing wildlife to migrate as they have done for millions of years, and in that landscape I also see paddock trees re-established," Mr Murphy says.

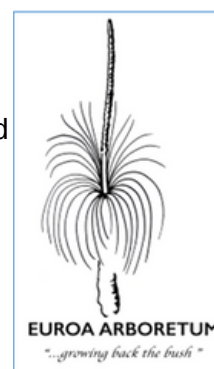
Sourced from the ABC News website.

Euroa Arboretum Fundraiser - Donate to Seed for the Future

The Goulburn Broken Indigenous Seedbank's mission is to provide genetically healthy seed to support landscape restoration activities. As a part of the Euroa Arboretum, a not-for-profit charitable organisation, they strive towards improving landscape health and biodiversity resilience, especially in the face of climate change.

Native vegetation plays a major role in landscape rehabilitation by improving soil health, restoring biodiversity, and providing habitat for native species. In an agricultural context, the benefits of native vegetation include providing shade, shelter and reducing the effects of salinity and erosion. The use of local (indigenous) seed as opposed to seed collected from anywhere in Australia means that the plants are adapted to the local environment. This results in higher growth and survival rates. All seed is collected under permit and is sourced from wild populations and Seed Production Areas throughout the catchment. These Seed Production Areas mean that the seed can be produced at the volumes needed for large-scale restoration goals, as well as providing the strongest and most climate-adapted genes, promoting future population health.

The Goulburn Broken Indigenous Seedbank serves the needs of Conservation Management Networks, Landcare groups, government organisations, nurseries, landowners and local conservation interest groups. They offer a range of products and services including: the sale of high-quality seed; pre-treatment and sale of indigenous seed mixes for direct seeding purposes; viability and germination tests; training of individuals and organisations; providing technical advice on indigenous seeds and plants; and the storage of precious species and provenances for disaster mitigation. Their website, gbseedbank.com.au, provides further information and a full database of all species available for sale. For any questions, please call **0428 770 030** or email seedbank@euroaarboretum.com.au.



You can donate at <https://seedforfuture.raisely.com> – any contributions fund the development of additional Seed Production Areas to protect local plant species and help restore threatened ecosystems.

Letter to the Editor

Hi Pauline,

I am trying to organise a Snake Avoidance class for my 2 dogs, and I was wanting to find out if any other Granite News readers would be interesting in attending.

I have not finalised any dates or prices as it will depend on how many participants are doing the class

I hope to have the class conducted at our farm in Caveat

If anyone is interested in attending, they can call me on **0407 860907**

Thank you so much

Gaylene McCooley

Please note the CORRECT mobile number this week,



HIGHLANDS BOOK CLUB



The Highlands Book Club continues to grow and its members enjoy sharing GREAT individual reads from the previous month or a group discussion on selected titles.

Next meeting is **Sat. 31st August @ 6pm**
@ the Highlands Hall

Everyone is welcome.
BYO some food to share.



Are you interested in adding to the

i Naturaliste'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.

Terip Tennis Club AGM

Sunday September 8th

**7.30pm at the
Terip Recreation Reserve**

All welcome

For more details please
contact **Cindy 0429 772 011**



Monthly Masterminds Card Nights

At: Highlands Hall

On: Wednesday 28th August

Shuffle starts at 5.30pm

Come and learn 'Joe' otherwise known as 'May I'

Come with a team of 4 players and two packs of cards.

We will teach you how.

**Challenging enough to keep you interested but not so hard you
want to go home.**

Ring for a team if you are a single or a double.

Clare Daly 0428 969366

\$10 a four, \$2.50 a single. BYO refreshments & plate to share



On the Road Highlands

Join us in Highlands for an evening, real people talking about real books, eBooks, magazines, films and other great works.

To RSVP, visit our website murrindindi.vic.gov.au/libraryevents, call 5772 0333, or drop in and let us know you'll be attending.

📍 Highlands Community Hall,
1603 Ghin Ghin Road,
Highlands.

📅 Friday 20 September

🕒 6.00 - 7.30 pm



SNOOP needs a new home - is it yours?

4 yr old German Wire-haired Pointer.

Just wants to be a lap dog, great on a lead and with other dogs. He has separation anxiety so best suited to someone who can work with him training wise or works from home. Currently at Animal Aid in Coldstream and will be put up for adoption in a few days if medical and behavioural checks are passed.

Thinks he's a lap dog and will happily get cuddles all day.

Interested? Contact Stephanie 0466 211 951



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 <p>Murrindindi Shire Council</p> <p>Cr John Walsh Koriella Ward Murrindindi Shire Council jwalsh@murrindindi.vic.gov.au</p> <p>0437 835 586</p>	<p>Tablelands Community Centre</p> <p>Upgraded facilities & playground Ideal for Private or Community gatherings Meetings, Workshops Very reasonable rates Hosts 1st Friday BBQs Contact tccruffly@gmail.com Ph 0404 833 388</p>	 <p>For All your Aerial Spraying or Spreading Needs. Specialising in Blackberries, Broadleaf, Thistles, Spreading lime/fertilizer & More</p> <p>Call 0484108854 48 Magills Lane Maidample 3723</p> 	<p>Donated by supporters of our local koala population</p> 
<p>Donation from supporters of our local Gang Gangs</p> 	<p>HIGHLANDS GROVE</p> <p>Australian, locally produced premium extra virgin olive oil. Farm gate pick up or delivery available.</p> <p>0417 018 070 enquiries@highlandsgrove.com.au highlandsgrove.com.au</p>	 <p>HIGHLANDS COMMUNITY HALL</p> <p>Meeting Room and/or Hall available for hire</p> <p>MEETINGS FUNCTIONS WORKSHOPS PARTIES WEDDINGS</p> <p>Reasonable Rates Contact Paula Lade 0419 551 882</p>	<p>Donated by friends of the Long Leafed Box Trees</p> 
<p>Echidnas take care of their habitat</p> 	<p>Granite Hills Community Nursery</p>  <p>www.granitehillsnursery.com.au</p>	<p>Need a website? bluetopbiz.com.au</p> <p>Affordable web design & maintenance. Presentations, marketing copy. Grant applications, project management.</p> <p>Call</p> <p>Sue 0411 010 379 Neil 0417 503 472</p> <p>Email: sue@bluetopbiz.com.au</p>	 <p>Strathbogie Granite Project neil.phillips@bigpond.com</p>



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.