



# THE GRANITE NEWS

2ND APRIL 2020

VOLUME 14

COVID-19 SPECIAL 4

WHITEHEADS CREEK • TERIP TERIP • CAVEAT • RUFFY • HIGHLANDS • HUGHES CREEK

## Welcome, Wumindjika and G'day

I must admit I do like Adam Hills' sense of humour and thoroughly enjoyed sitting in the front stalls for one of his performances at a recent Melbourne Comedy Festival. Whilst his jokes are laugh-out-loud events there is usually an underlying and poignant theme to his shows, which is slowly revealed and makes him seem even more human and approachable as a result.

It therefore goes without saying that I enjoy watching 'The Last Laugh' on TV and with Alex and Josh as part of the team most of the programs are excellent viewing. Last week, like most live shows at present, they presented the show without an audience which was a bit weird and naturally enough most of the discussion centred on Covid-19.

One particularly noteworthy item was a clip from a speech that the British Chancellor of the Exchequer, Rishi Sunak, gave and was described as having "clarity and poise". See what you think.

**"Now more than at any time in our history we will be judged by our capacity for compassion. Our ability to come through this won't just be down to what the Government and businesses do, but by the individual acts of kindness that we show each other."** Until next issue, **Pauline And Kenny?** Continues to self-isolate, he'll be back again soon....

## Home gardeners respond to COVID-19

The Goulburn Murray Valley (GMV) Fruit Fly office in Victoria has responded to a surge in enquires by the public wanting to grow their own fruit and vegetables in the safety of their own backyards due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

With COVID-19 restrictions escalating daily more and more people are opting to grow their own fruit and vegetables, with a reported run on vegetable seedling and seed sales in recent weeks and months.

Our communities should be assured that our food security is not under threat and that Australia produces more than enough fresh produce to abundantly feed our nation, with the GMV being the 'Nation's Orchard'. Our supermarkets and food suppliers are essential services and will remain open so there is no need for panic buying.

However, for those who are extending their vegetable gardens or starting a garden for the first time it is important to be aware of the steps needed to reduce the spread of fruit fly, which is critical in protecting Victoria's horticulture industry.

How can you be sure that what is grown will not be ruined by fruit fly - the answer is simple, **'Pick, Prune, Protect'**. This means instigating monitoring, prevention and control activities to ensure clean, green produce to enjoy.

The GMV Fruit Fly Project is funded by the Victorian Government's Managing Fruit Fly Regional Grants Program. For more information about fruit fly prevention in the GMV, email [gmvfruitfly@moira.vic.gov.au](mailto:gmvfruitfly@moira.vic.gov.au) or visit [www.gmv-qldfruitfly.com.au](http://www.gmv-qldfruitfly.com.au)



Feedback? - [editor@tgn.org.au](mailto:editor@tgn.org.au)

or to subscribe on-line go to

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**"Life appears to be too short to be spent nursing animosities or registering wrongs."**

**Charlotte Bronte (1816-1855)**  
**Novelist**

**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**

## Let's Laugh!



| Month           | Highlands | Ruffy    |
|-----------------|-----------|----------|
| March           | 89.4 mm   | 61.5 mm  |
| 2020 Total      | 212.2 mm  | 120.4 mm |
| March Rain Days | 5 Days    | 5 Days   |

## Community Notices & Classifieds

### CALENDAR of EVENTS — April

|  |  |  |
|--|--|--|
|  <b>Friday 10th April</b><br><b>@ 6.30pm</b> | <b>DRINKS ON THE DECK</b><br>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. <div>Cancelled</div>  | <b>at Highlands Community Hall</b>                                       |
| <b>Friday 10th April -</b><br><b>Monday 13th April</b>   | <b>EASTER - Celebrate at home with your immediate, at home, family</b><br>2021 will be the time to celebrate further afield, in the overall scheme of things it's not that long to wait.  |  |
| <b>Friday 17th April</b><br><b>@ 6.30pm</b>  | <b>HIGHLANDS HALL BLUES NIGHT</b><br>Come along for an excellent evening of music and support the hall. <div>Postponed</div>   | <b>at Highlands Community Hall</b>                                       |
|  <b>Monday 20th April</b><br><b>@ 11am</b>  | <b>HIGHLANDS SPINNING CLUB</b><br>The Highlands Spinning Club will get together in 2020 at the same place—450 Caveat-Dropmore Rd, the same time 11am and a great tea & coffee will be provided. <div>Postponed until further notice</div>                                    | <b>Enquiries? - contact Jan 5790 4361</b>                                |
| <b>Every second</b><br><b>Wednesday 10.30-12.30</b>  | <b>MURRINDINDI MOBILE LIBRARY SERVICE</b><br>The Mobile Library visits the community every fortnight. Why not pop in??<br><b>Please note the Mobile Library Service is temporarily suspended until further notice!!</b> <div>Postponed until further notice</div>            | <b>at Highlands Community Hall</b>                                       |
| <b>Every Monday</b><br><b>@ 10 am</b>  | <b>QIGONG AT RUFFY</b><br>Vivien Watmough looks forward to welcoming you to the benefits of this ancient well-being practice. For bookings and enquiries please call Vivien on 57953349 or email: <a href="mailto:vivienwatmough@gmail.com">vivienwatmough@gmail.com</a>     | <b>at Tablelands Community Centre Ruffy</b>                              |
| <b>Every Thursday</b><br><b>@ 7.30 (sharp) - 9pm</b>   | <b>SWING DANCE CLASSES - Free!</b><br>Swing dances feature the jazzy Big Band music of the 1930s and 40s, and they are definitely all about having fun!!   | <b>at Euroa Uniting Church Hall</b><br><b>Enquiries? Ray 0467 951559</b> |

## We're all in this together

### Information on Emergency Relief Packages for Victorians

Emergency relief packages are available to support people who:

Are in mandatory self-isolation (because they have COVID-19, are suspected of having COVID-19 or have come into close contact with people who have COVID-19 or have recently travelled overseas) AND

Who have little or no food, AND

Have no network of family and friends to support them.

Each eligible household will receive a two-week supply of essential goods.

Food packages will include items such as long-life milk, pasta, cereal, canned vegetables and sugar. Personal care packages will also be distributed to eligible households and include soap, toothpaste and deodorant.

Additional items may also be provided depending on the needs of the household, such as nappies or baby formula.

For more information about the support services people can call the coronavirus hotline on **1800 675 398** or visit the website:

[dhhs.vic.gov.au/coronavirus](https://dhhs.vic.gov.au/coronavirus).



### AMNESTY BURN PERIOD

Since the CFA declared an end to the fire danger period, an amnesty burn period has been in place and will remain in place until

**Monday 4 May 2020.**

Residents in farming areas can burn off vegetation material without a permit. Residents in township zones and built up areas can burn-off vegetation material without a permit until **Monday 4 May 2020.**

Residents can also deposit green waste **free of charge** and all year round at any of Council's Resource Recovery Centres.

There are a number of conditions that still apply. Before burning off, please register your burn by calling **1800 668 511.**

For more information about burning off and the amnesty period, please visit our website and search 'amnesty', or give us a call.

## CFA directives during the Coronavirus hiatus

For those CFA volunteers who may not have caught up with the following directives from the CFA CEO, Steve Warrington, and for anyone else who falls into the following categories, the following is worth reading.

On Sunday, 29/3/20 the National Cabinet released updated advice on self-isolation to protect those in our community with increased vulnerability to the coronavirus.

The health and safety of our people is always my number one priority, and I sincerely thank those members who are already taking proactive steps to limit their exposure to the coronavirus.

However, in light of the new National Cabinet guidance, if you are in one of the following categories, I encourage you to **discuss your situation** with your Captain, Group Officer or Officer-In-Charge, and **proactively self-isolate**:

- **Volunteer members 70 years and over**
- **Volunteer Emergency Medical Response members 65 years and over**
- **Indigenous members with a chronic medical condition(s) 50 years and over**
- **Any member with a chronic medical condition(s) 60 years and over**



Professional, technical and administrative staff (PTA) who are either 65 years and over or have a chronic medical condition(s) should be now working from home, with local arrangements made by exception for those whose work can't be conducted remotely.

**This is a temporary arrangement in light of COVID-19 – I can't stress that enough.**

You are not deserting your brigade by proactively self-isolating. It's not a reflection on your ability to support your brigade and your community.

This is a risk-based decision that we needed to make based on the advice and the need to ensure your welfare during this time. I support and encourage you to put yourself first at this time. I know it's something that many of you find hard to do but if ever there was a time to do this, it's now.

Any brigades who have concerns about the service delivery implications of these temporary changes should seek support from their catchment officer or Assistant Chief Fire Officer (formerly OM).

Brigade Management Teams should also give consideration to what alternative roles members might be able to perform while in self-isolation to support their brigade.

This is a tough time for many of our people and their families, and I urge you to reach out for help if you need it.

**Our Wellbeing Support Line is available any time day or night to all members and their families.** A range of tip sheets as well as a new wellbeing webinar series are now available via our intranet to support you during this time of change and uncertainty.

## Covid-19 Fast Facts

The latest research has yielded the following revelations -

- \* Traces of Coronavirus have survived on stainless steel and hard plastics for **72 hours** and on cardboard for **12 hours**.
- \* Coronavirus droplets can be airborne for **3 hours** & can be conveyed from person to person as well as via surfaces.
- \* Despite the above details Coronavirus is quite delicate in the environment which is why hand washing is so effective



## Rakali - White-tipped Tailed Water Rat (*Hydromys Chrysogaster*)

Rakalis are more common than you think and many waterways in The Granite News region are home to these beautiful native creatures. Commonly known as water rats, a push was made in the 1990s to use the indigenous name, Rakali to give this animal's reputation a makeover.

Rakali are nocturnal and specially adapted to live in waterways, with webbed feet and soft water-resistant fur. Their fur is so impressive there was once a thriving water rat fur industry in Australia, but they are now protected by law in all states.

They are rodents and are commonly confused with introduced rat species and still thought of as a pest by some. Fishers and boat owners in particular have issues with them as Rakali love to feed on platform areas and moored yachts and boats are ideal for that well-deserved snack.

They can be found in lakes, rivers and estuaries, in fresh or salt water, in all the eastern states and in pockets of WA and NT. In Victoria, they can even be seen swimming beside St Kilda Pier and happily live alongside human populations.

Rakali are also highly intelligent, as shown by their rapid adaptation to hunting and eating one of Australia's most toxic introduced species – the invasive cane toad. A university study in the Kimberley area of WA discovered that these smart creatures were successfully killing large cane toads by eating just their hearts and livers, along with the back leg muscle. This selective menu means that they avoid being killed by the toad's poison glands which are situated on their head, neck and shoulders.

However, the study is unsure whether water rats have very rapidly learned how to safely attack and eat cane toads, or if they are adapting a similar long-term hunting strategy that they may use to eat toxic native frogs. As they care for their offspring for at least four weeks after they finish producing milk, rakalis are very well placed to pass on such hunting strategies. This could help spread the knowledge of toad hunting across streams and creeks over time.

Cane toad eradicator! What's not to love about these aquatic mammals?

As one Rakali enthusiast from Tasmania puts it, "Everyone loves otters, you see all these videos shared on Facebook and social media about otters. We're lucky, we have an otter in Australia, it's just named a rat."

Or Rakali.

NB: Tasmanian Rakalis have golden belly fur, which distinguishes them from their mainland cousins.



## Sanity Saver Suggestions

How do you keep a sense of normality when all around us is not normal? Here are a few suggestions -

- \* Take time each day to catch up on the latest developments on Covid-19 from a trusted news source, but don't binge, that way lies insanity and insecurity, and life is too short for either
- \* Keep in contact with family and friends - 21st Century technology makes this easy and simple
- \* Take some time each day to do something you love
- \* Learn a new skill, there are heaps of on-line courses, or try something you've been meaning to learn/do
- \* Take the dog(s) for a walk, they will enjoy the exercise and so will you!

# **RUFFY RURAL FIRE BRIGADE**

## **Royal Children's Hospital FUNDRAISING AUCTIONS**

**The 2020 Good Friday Ruffy CFA Seafood Lunch is cancelled !**

**We are not even permitted to 'door-knock' or 'tin rattle'  
to raise funds for the Royal Children's Hospital.**

**BUT, we have a target to beat !**

**So, we are auctioning a tandem-trailer load of split firewood  
each month for April, May, June & July.**

**Bidding opens 1st day of each month & closes midnight last day of month**

**You can place your bids by phone, SMS message, email or in person to**

**Ruffy Rural Fire Brigade Treasurer—Don Cook**

**Mobile: 0408 929 818—Email: mavdon50@gmail.com**

**Progressive Auction totals will be notified to current bidders,  
posted on the Ruffy Facebook page and at the Ruffy fire-shed  
Or just call Cookie for a bidding update!**

**ALL funds raised from these Auctions will go to the  
Royal Children's Hospital  
Good Friday Appeal**

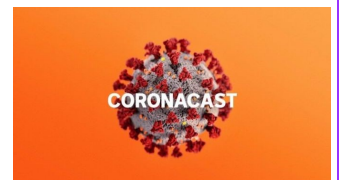


*Delivery is included to the  
Ruffy /Highlands/Tablelands*

### **Coronacast - all yours for free!**

In these times of instant social media and 'fake news' Coronacast is an accurate podcast that helps to answer your questions about coronavirus or COVID19. The latest news and research is broken down to help you understand how the world is living through an epidemic.

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